A

TREATISE

ON THE

INFLUENCE OF THE PASSIONS,

UPON THE

HAPPINESS

OF

INDIVIDUALS AND OF NATIONS.

ILLUSTRATED BY STRIKING REFERENCES TO THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS AND CHARACTERS THAT HAVE DISTINGUISHED THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

FROM THE FRENCH OF

THE BARONESS STAEL DE HOLSTEIN.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A Sketch of her Life,

BY THE TRANSLATOR.

QUÆSIVIT CŒLO LUCEM INGEMUITQUE REPERTA.

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THE

AUTHOR's PREFACE.

I MAY, perhaps, seem to betray the impatience of authorship, by publishing the first part of a work while the second still remains in an unfinished state: but this impatience will, I trust, be excused, when it appears that, notwithstanding the connection of the parts with one another, each may be regarded as a separate work. This impatience may likewise as probably arise from reflecting, that, condemned to celebrity without the means of being properly known, I feel anxious that my writings should lead to the knowledge of my disposition: for, incessantly exposed to the shafts of calumny, and too conscious of my own unimportance to attempt speaking of

myself, I unreluctantly indulge the hope, that by giving to the world this Essay, the fruit of my meditations, I may afford some idea of the habits of my life, and the nature of my character.

LAUSANNE, July 1, 1796.

SKETCH OF THE LIFE

OF

MADAME DE STAEL.

IT has been observed that the life of a man of letters furnishes few incidents that can employ the pen of the biographer or gratify the curiosity of the public. The celebrity of an author's works, indeed, throws a lustre upon the most obscure scenes of his life, and gives an interest to the most trivial occurrences. Every little anecdote derives an importance from the name with which it is connected, and every action is embellished by an association with performances which every one reads and admires.

The life of a female author, in general, must still be more barren of variety and of incident. The amusements, the intrigues, the

occupations of a woman of fashion, do not greatly interest those who are beyond her circle. Her wit or her manners may delight and animate the scenes in which she moves, but they cannot be consigned with equal effect to the page of the biographer. When we are told that the woman of rank, whose writings we peruse with pleasure, lived in the first orders of fashion, that she was courted and admired by the most distinguished votaries of literature, we can expect little farther gratification. It is in her writings still that we cultivate an acquaintance with her. As a woman of fashion, she differs but little from the crowd around her; while the sprightliness of her conversation, and the elegance of her wit, in a literary circle, form features of a character which it is difficult to seize and to embody in the detail of her life.

Madame de Stael possesses hereditary claims to distinction. Independently of her own celebrity, she derives a consequence from the parents to whom she owes her birth. She is the only child of the celebrated M. Neckar,

whose reputation as a financier and politician has been equally extolled and depreciated. The important offices which he filled, and the principal part which he performed in the French monarchy at the beginning of the revolution, have rendered him the object of universal notice; and his conduct the subject of much controversy. Many impute to him the blame of having encouraged the revolutionary spirit till it became too powerful to be repressed. At the same time, however calamitous may have been the consequences of that revolution, the intention of M. Neckar cannot fairly be questioned, nor his fidelity to the master whom he served justly arraigned.

Her mother was Mademoiselle Curchod, a lady distinguished by the highest accomplishments of mind and person. She was the first love of the celebrated Mr. Gibbon, and he once entertained the design of offering her his hand. Before he could put his intention in execution, Mademoiselle Curchod became the wife of M. Neckar, then a Banker at Paris. While she

lived, she was the pride and ornament of the rank in which she moved. The house of Neckar was the resort of literary eminence. Madame Neckar wrote a variety of pieces, which did the highest honour to her talents. Since her death, M. Neckar has published three volumes of her *Thoughts, Maxims, Correspondence, &c.*

The only daughter of parents whose wealth was immense, whose literary qualifications were so eminent, it is natural to suppose that the education of Madame de Stael would be superintended in such a manner as to combine the highest accomplishments with the first rank and fortune. At a very early period of life she displayed uncommon powers. No pains were spared to cultivate her mind. The example and the attention of her mother equally served to the improvement of her talents, and she soon gained a superiority not merely in superficial accomplishments, but in solid acquirements, which fall to the lot of but very few of her sex.

Her natural temper soon displayed the utmost sprightliness and vivacity. In one of his visits to Neckar, at his seat at Copet, near Lausanne, Mr. Gibbon mentions his having seen the daughter of his old mistress. She was then about eighteen, and wit, animation, and perhaps an excess of vivacity, were her chief characteristics.

M. Neckar was a protestant, and wished to unite his daughter to a man of the same religious persuasion. At an early age, accordingly, he married his daughter to the Baron de Stael, a Swedish nobleman of rank and consequence. The Baron de Stael was long the Minister of Sweden in Paris, and at present he fills the office of Ambassador of his Court to the French Republic.

This union, however, was not thought to be very happy. To whatever causes it might be owing, her marriage was not attended with much domestic felicity, and for some years Madame Stael and her husband have not lived on the best terms. Her warm and sprightly

temper and French education might not well agree with the more sober habits of a Swedish nobleman.

On the commencement of the French revolution, Madame Stael, of an ardent temper, was favourable to its cause. She had already begun to be distinguished for talents and wit, and her house was frequented by many of the first literary characters in France. She was not, however, a partizan of the violent democratical faction: she was attached to what has been termed the Constitutionalists, those who were friends to a limited and constitutional monarchy.

At her house, as Mr. Burke informs us in his 'Letters on a Regicide Peace,' the chiefs of the *Feuillans* used to meet and concert their measures. These were the two Lameths, La Fayette, Barnaud Vergniaud, &c. This party, however, was soon crushed by the overbearing and extravagant character of the Jacobins. Several of its most active leaders perished, many of them were exiled, and Madame Stael

herself found it necessary to quit France. She came to England, where she resided for some time. She lived rather retired in the country, though occasionally visited by many persons of distinction.

After the fall of the sanguinary Robespierre, Madame Stael returned to Paris, where she again became the centre of attraction to a political party. When the constitution of 1795 was established, she was its decided supporter; and many of the persons who came into power under the new government were her friends.

The new constitution was soon assailed by opposite factions, and the Directory were not supposed to observe very scrupulously the legal limits of their prerogatives. Parties became incensed against each other. Madame Stael was attached to the existing administration. She accordingly became the object of abuse from the most violent of the other side, many of whom were accused of a design to

restore royalty. Great influence with the new rulers was ascribed to Madame Stael. Many measures obnoxious to the party in opposition were imputed to her counsels. This importance, and this influence with the people in power, Madame Stael disclaims. Certain it is, however, that some of the present Directors and Ministers were frequently of her parties. This, however, may be as justly ascribed to the attraction of her company and conversation, as to any influence or intrigue.

Previous to the violent measures which the Directory put in execution against so many representatives of the people, in condemning them to transportation without even the formality of a trial, Madame de Stael was the object of incessant scurrility and abuse. She was accused of being the main spring of many schemes which the friends of the Directory thought it necessary to adopt. A number of lampoons and epigrams were written against her; but she disclaimed all concern in the transactions imputed to her. Among these were

the following whimsical lines, the first of which alludes to the work upon the passions:

Les Accouchemens de la Baronne de Stael.

Apres avoir fait un gros livre,
Puis un gros club, puis un amant,
Puis un ministre au teint de cuivre,
Puis un commis nomme *Constant*,
Puis un achat, argent comptant,
Puis un plan qu'Augereau doit suivre,
Puis a Barras son compliment,
Deux mois en repos voulant vivre,
La Baronne a fait—un enfant.

These squibs, however, and a thousand other witticisms which were launched against her, are totally without foundation. Madame de Stael was the enemy of those factions which then, under various denominations, endeavoured to obtain the executive power into their own hands. From many passages of the following work, it appears that she deeply felt and deplored the calamities which the revolution had produced. She was convinced that France had suffered too much from the rage of faction, again to tempt the same evils. From a horror of innovation, she actually wish-

ed to support the newly established government, and rather to adhere to what existed, than to seek any change whatever. In fact, so far from deriving influence from that event, which she was accused of having counselled, she has since lived in the neighbourhood of Paris in privacy and retirement.

Whatever attacks the rage of faction, or the malignancy of scandal, may have directed against Madame de Stael, even her enemies do not dispute the extent of her talents, and the vigour of her mind. Her literary attainments, her acquaintance with mankind, her general knowledge, her ingenuity, discrimination, and philosophical acuteness, are generally confessed.

The character of Madame de Stael's works differs greatly from that by which the writings of many of her sex are distinguished. She affects no gaudiness of diction, no flimsy decoration, no false and vitious refinement of stile, the faults into which the writings of the fair in the present age are apt to run. She analyses with philoso-

phical accuracy; her stile displays a masculine vigour. If her composition be obscured by any blemish, it is rather by a philosophical language, which, from two great and generalizing abstraction of ideas, becomes stiff, and by a refinement of analysis which borders upon obscurity. Those, however, who peruse her writings with care, will find that they contain much information, and a thorough acquaintance with the human heart.

Besides the work upon the Passions, Madame de Stael some time before published an Essay on the Character and Writings of the celebrated Philosopher of Geneva, Rousseau. This performance possesses the highest reputation in France. It is distinguished by uncommon ingenuity of remark, a singular discernment of character, and wonderful display of critical acuteness. The character of Rousseau has in every country of Europe been canvassed with rigour, but the singular temperament of his extravagant mind, the true merit and beauty

of his writings were never more clearly developed and explained than in the Essay of Madame de Stael.

The following work upon the Passions obtained great success in France. It has likewise extended its fame into Germany. Its great aim is to show that the passions tend to embitter the happiness of individuals, and to disturb the peace of nations. She considers the very essence of passion to consist in its violence; passion under the dominion of reason is no passion at all. She demonstrates that mankind ought to endeavour to avoid as much as possible the influence of the passions; that is, bring themselves to that state of philosophical apathy when they can think without enthusiasm, and act without *impulse.*

The reasoning by which this doctrine is supported will be found to possess uncommon ingenuity, the movements of the heart are laid open with a masterly hand, and the origin of

our feelings and sentiments carefully traced. Upon a second perusal, her book will please, perhaps, more than upon the first.

Madame de Stael is now about thirty. Her figure is not remarkable for beauty or elegance. She is not tall. There is, however, a liveliness and vivacity in her countenance extremely engaging, and her manners and conversation are highly attractive.

TRANSLATOR.

The following account of this work is given in the Appendix to the MONTHLY REVIEW:

"The daughter of Neckar, the wife of the Swedish Ambassador at Paris, has naturally been a very close spectatrix of the revolutionary phænomena of that city. Worthy, from her talents, to counsel mankind, and formed by the Graces to influence their conduct, she has often

been suspected of taking a direct part in the affairs of France, and has incurred abuse from the vulgar insolence of Louvet, and other periodical writers.

"The whole of the work is written with a smooth propriety, often bordering on elegance, but never aspiring to eloquence; yet it is sufficiently enriched with new, sensible, and valuable reflections and observations."

INFLUENCE OF THE PASSIONS

UPON THE

HAPPINESS

OF

INDIVIDUALS AND OF NATIONS.

AT what period is it that I have attempted to discourse of the "Happiness of Individuals and of Nations?" Is it amidst the crisis of a wide desolating Revolution, the effects of which no condition has escaped; and when its thunder strikes alike the bosom of the lowly valley and the front of the proudest hills? Is it at a time when, if you but live, you are necessarily hurried on by one universal movement—when the night of the grave fails to secure repose---when the very *dead* are judged anew, and their cold remains, which popular favour had inurned, are alternately admitted into, or expelled from, that temple where factions imagined they bestowed immortality? Yes, it is at this very time, when either the hope or the want of happiness has prompted the human race to rise; it is in an age like the

present that one is powerfully led seriously to reflect on the nature of individual and political felicity; on the road that leads to it; on the limits that confine it; on the rocks that rise between, and bar us from its enjoyment. But shame, however, be my lot, if during the reign of Terror under which France trembled, if during the course of those two frightful years, my mind had been capable of such a task!—shame be my lot, if it had attempted to conceive the plan, or ponder on the result of this monstrous mixture of all human atrocities. The coming generation will, perhaps, also be induced to investigate the causes that influenced the black proceedings of those two eventful years; but we, the contemporaries and the fellow citizens of the hapless victims sacrificed on those days of blood, could we have *then* retained the power to generalize our ideas, to dwell unconcernedly on mere abstract notions, to withdraw from the home of heart, in order to analize its emotions? No, not even now can reason attempt to approach the examination of that unaccountable æra. And, indeed, to appreciate those events, under whatever colours you depict them, argues an attempt to reduce them to the class of existing ideas, of ideas which we are already in possession of words to describe. At the sight of this hideous picture all the emotions of the soul are roused anew: we freeze; we burn; we are anxious for the combat;

we are resolved to die: but as for thinking, thought cannot yet repose on any of those recollections; the sensations they impress absorb every other faculty. It is therefore by secluding from my mind every retrospect of that prodigious æra, while I avail myself of the other prominent events of the French Revolution, and of the history of every nation, that I shall endeavour to combine a few impartial observations on the nature of governments; and if these reflections lead me to an admission of the first principles on which is bottomed the French Republican Constitution, I hope that, notwithstanding the violence of party-spirit by which France is torn, and, through the medium of France, the rest of the civilized world—I hope, I say, it may be possible to conceive that an enthusiastic attachment to certain notions does not exclude a sovereign contempt for certain men,* and that a favourable hope of the future may not be irreconcileable with a just execration of the past; and though the wounds which the heart has received must still continue to bleed, yet, after the lapse of some interval, the mind

* In my opinion, the real partizans of republican liberty are those who most vehemently execrate the crimes that have been perpetrated in its name. Their adversaries may doubtless experience the same horror at those abominations; but as those very crimes supply an argument to their system, they do not overwhelm their minds, as they do those of the friends of freedom, with every possible sensation of grief.

may again raise itself to general contemplations.

In the present consideration of these important questions on which is to depend the political destiny of man, we ought merely to view them in their own nature, and not barely with relation to the calamities which have attended their discussion; we ought at least to examine whether these calamities be essentially connected with the institutions which France is desirous of adopting, or whether the effects of the Revolution be not wholly and absolutely distinct from the consequences of the Constitution; we ought finally to evince sufficient elevation of soul to spurn the apprehension, lest, while we are exploring the foundation of principles, we should be suspected of indifference for crimes. It is with a similar independence of mind that I have essayed, in the first part of this work, to describe the influence of the passions of man upon his own personal happiness. Neither do I perceive why it should be more difficult to be impartial in the discussion of political, than in the investigation of moral questions: undoubtedly the passions exert as powerful an influence as governments on the condition of human life, and nevertheless, in the calm silence of retirement, our reason is curious to discuss the sentiments we ourselves have experienced; nor, in my opinion, ought it to be a more arduous task to discourse

philosophically of the advantages or disadvantages of Republics and of Monarchies, than to institute an exact analysis of Ambition, of Love, or of any other passion that may have biassed your conduct, and proved decisive of your fate. In either part of this work, I have been equally studious to be guided solely by my reason, and to steer it clear of all the impressions of the moment. It is for my readers to judge how far I have succeeded.

From the passions, that impulsive force, which domineers over the will of man, arises the principal obstacle to individual and political happiness. Without the interference of the passions, governments would be a machine fully as simple as the different levers whose power is proportioned to the weight they are to raise, and the destiny of man would exactly result from a just equilibrium between his desires and his means of gratifying them. I shall therefore consider morals and politics only in as much as they experience difficulties from the operation of the passions. Characters uninfluenced by the passions naturally place themselves in the situation that best befits them, which is generally the one pointed out to them by chance; or if they introduce any change in it, it is only that which was easily and immediately within their reach. Let us not disturb their happy calm; they want not our assistance: their hap-

piness is as varied in appearance as the different lots which their destiny has drawn ; but the basis of that happiness is invariably the same, viz. the certainty of never being either agitated, or overruled by any emotion beyond the compass of their resistance. The lives of these *impassible* beings are doubtless as much exposed as those of other men to the operation of material accidents, which may destroy their fortunes, impair their health, &c.

But afflictions of this nature are prevented or removed not by sensible or moral thoughts, but by positive computations. The happiness of *impassioned* characters being, on the contrary, wholly dependant on what passes within them, they alone can derive consolation from the reflections which are awakened in their souls; and as the natural bent of their inclinations exposes them to the most cruel calamities, they stand peculiarly in need of a system whose object it is to avoid pain. In a word, it is your *impassioned* characters only who, by means of certain traits of resemblance, may, in their aggregate, become the subject of the same general considerations. Persons of the other cast of character live, as it were, one by one, without either analogy or variety, in a monotonous kind of existence, though each of them pursue a different end, and present as many varying shades as there are individuals: it is im-

possible, however, to discover in them any real characteristic colour. If, in a treatise on individual happiness, I touch only on *impassioned* characters, it is still more natural to analize governments in relation to the play they give to the influence of the passions. An individual may be considered as exempt from passions; but a collective body of men is composed of a certain number of characters of every cast, which yield a result nearly similar: and it ought to be observed, that circumstances the most dependent on chance, may be the subject of a positive calculation, whenever the chances are multiplied. In the Canton of *Berne*, for example, it has been observed that every ten years nearly the same number of divorces took place; and there are several towns in Italy where an exact calculation is made of the number of murders that are regularly committed every year. Thus events, which link with a multitude of various combinations, have their periodical return, and preserve a fixed proportion, when our observations on them are the result of a great number of chances. Hence we may be led to believe that political science may one day acquire the force of geometrical evidence. The science of morals, when applied to a particular individual, may be wholly erroneous with regard to him; but the organization of a constitution is invariably grounded on

data that are fixed, as the greater number in every thing affords results that are always similar and always foreseen. That the greatest difficulty which obstructs the march of governments, arises from the passions, is a truth that needs no illustration ; and it is pretty evident that all the despotic social combinations would prove equally suitable to those listless and inert dispositions that are satisfied to remain in the situation which chance has allotted them, and that the most purely abstract democratical theory might be reduced to practice among wise men, whose sole rule of conduct would be the dictates of their reason. You might, therefore, solve whatever is problematical in constitutions, if you could but discover to what degree the passions may be incited or repressed, without endangering the public happiness.

But before I proceed further, it may perhaps be expected that I attempt a definition of happiness. Happiness, then, such as we aspire after, is the re-union of all the contraries. For individuals, it is hope without fear, activity without solicitude, celebrity without detraction, love without inconstancy ; that glow of imagination that embellishes to the eye of fancy whatever we possess, and dims the recollection of whatever we may have lost ; in a word, the very reverse of moral nature, the pure perfection of every condition, of every talent, of

every pleasure, unmixed and unadulterated with the ills that usually attend them. The happiness of nations must likewise result from the well-tempered combination of republican liberty with monarchical quiet; of the rivalry of talents with the inactivity of factions; of the pride of military glory abroad with submissive obedience to the laws at home. Happiness, such as the mind of man endeavours to conceive, is an object beyond the reach of human efforts; and happiness that is attainable, can only be accomplished by a patient study of the surest means that can shield us from the greater ills of life. To the investigation of these means the present treatise is devoted.

And in this attempt, two works may be blended into one—The first considers man in his relations to himself; the other views him in the social relations of all the individuals to each other. Nor are the principal ideas of these two works without some analogy; because a nation exhibits the character of a man, and the force of a government acts upon a nation as an individual is acted on by the force of his own reason. The wish of the philosopher is to give permanency to the transient will of reflection, while the social art tends to perpetuate the actions of wisdom. In a word, what is great is discoverable in what is little; together with

the same exactness of proportions. The whole of the universe is reflected in each of its parts, and the more it appears the result of one grand idea, the greater is the admiration it inspires.

There is a wide difference, however, between the system of Individual Happiness and that of the Happiness of Nations: in the former, we may aspire to the most perfect moral independence; that is, to the subjection of all the passions, every man having it in his power to make the experiment on himself: but in the latter, political liberty must be calculated on the positive and indestructible existence of a certain number of *impassioned* dispositions, which constitute a part of the people who are to be governed. The first part of this work shall be solely consecrated to reflections on the individual destiny of man;—the second will embrace the constitutional lot of nations.

The first volume is divided into three sections; the first of which treats successively of the influence of each particular passion on the happiness of man; the second analizes the relation between certain affections of the soul to the operation of passion or of reason; the third exhibits a picture of the resources which man finds within himself, of those that are independent of chance, but more especially of the will of other men.

In the second part of this work, it is my intention to examine ancient and modern Governments, with respect to the influence which they leave to the passions that are natural to men in a state of political union; and to trace the causes of the rise, duration, and the fall of Governments, from the greater or less play which they have given to that curiosity of action which exists in all societies. In the first section of the second part, I will investigate the causes that have abridged the duration and obstructed the happiness of those Governments in which all the passions have been repressed. In the second section, I will enquire into the causes that have been unfriendly to the happiness, and particularly to the duration of Governments where all the passions have been incited. In the third section, I will treat of the reasons which dissuade the generality of mankind from confining themselves within the compass of little states, where democratical liberty may indeed exist, but where there is no powerful incentive to kindle the passions, and no great field in which they may expatiate.

In fine, I will close this work with some reflections on the nature of Representative Constitutions, in which may be combined a part of the advantages that are the *desiderata* of other Governments.

These two works are necessarily connected: for if man, in his individual capacity, could succeed in subjugating his passions, the system of Governments would be so simplified, that we could then adopt, as practicable, that complete independence, which the organization of little States are capable of. But allowing the impracticability of this metaphysical theory, it would nevertheless be true, that the more we laboured to tranquilize the impetuous sentiments that disturb the internal quiet of the human heart, the less would be the necessity of modifying public liberty. It is the dominion of the passions that continually compels us to sacrifices of our independence, that we may secure order, and all the means that tend to restore to reason its due ascendancy, and diminish the number of sacrifices we must make of our liberties.

I have as yet scarcely entered on the second political part; nor can I now attempt to give any more than a succinct and cursory idea of it. As my mind dwells on it, I perceive that a considerable length of time will be necessary for collecting the various information, and instituting all the necessary researches that must contribute to form its ground-work. But should the changes and chances of this mortal life, or the painful emotions that agitate my heart, cut short the thread of my existence,

I should be happy that some other pen would execute the plan which I have traced out to myself. The following is an imperfect view of it; but which cannot convey any idea of the whole.

Our first care should be, in the analysis of ancient and modern Governments, to trace out and to discover, in the history of nations, what solely belongs to the nature of their respective constitutions. MONTESQUIEU, in his sublime work *on the Causes of the Greatness and of the Fall of the Romans*, has promiscuously treated of the various causes that influenced the fate of that empire. To his book we must resort for information, and at the same time select from the history of other nations those events which immediately flowed from their constitutions; and perhaps it may be found that every event is derived from the same source. Nations are brought up by their Governments as children are by parental authority: but the operation of Governments on Nations is not uncertain, like that of private education on individuals. For, as I have already observed, the chances of hazard may operate with regard to the character of one individual, while, with regard to a collective body of men, the results are always the same. That organization of the public power, which stimulates or represses ambition, renders this or that religious worship more or

less necessary; this or that particular penal code either too mild or too severe; or a given extent of territory either dangerous or convenient.— In a word, on the idea which Nations conceive of the Social Order, depends the destiny of the human race under all its relations; and the highest degree of perfection of which it is susceptible, is the acquisition of fixed notions on the subject of political knowledge. Were Nations at peace, both at home and abroad, the arts, the sciences, and discoveries of every kind would daily advance with new and more rapid strides, and philosophy would not fall back, in two years of civil war, from the progress it had been making during ages of tranquillity.

After having fully established the primary importance of the nature of Constitutions, their influence must next be proved by the examination of characteristic traits, drawn from the history of the manners, the administration, the literature, the art military of every nation. I shall first take a view of the countries which in all times have been ruled by despotic power, and while I endeavour to account for their apparent difference, I will shew that their history, as far as it regards the relation of cause and effect, has uniformly been perfectly similar. I shall also explain the effects that must invariably be produced on the mind of man, by the compression of his natural emotions, and

that by an external force to which his reason gives no kind of assent, and over which it possesses no controul. In the examination of anarchies, whether demagogical or military, it is also to be observed, that these two causes, which appear so opposite, afford similar results, because in the two kinds of States the political passions are equally excited in the human mind, by the removal of all positive fears, and the vivifying influence of all unlimited hopes.

In the consideration of certain States, which, from peculiar circumstances, still more than by the smallness of their extent, are utterly unable to play any principal part on the theatre of Politics, and which within themselves can open no field to the range of genius and ambition, it is curious to observe how solicitous man is to exercise his faculties, and what eagerness he betrays to enlarge his sphere of action, in proportion to his consciousness of powers. In States that are sunk in obscurity, the arts remain stationary, literature is neither encouraged nor advanced by that emulation which calls forth the powers of Eloquence, nor by that variety and multitude of objects of comparison, by which alone sound judgment and refined taste can with certainty be acquired. Men, who are deprived of vigorous occupations, have their minds daily contracted more and more within the circle of domestic ideas;

but talents, genius, and whatever man inherits as the gifts of nature, can only be expanded and improved by an unchecked intercourse with different societies. Among the same number of men, who remain divided and separated, without any spring of action, or any object of pursuit, there is scarcely ever discovered a superior mind, an ardent soul, an energetic character; while in other countries, among a similar number of individuals, many would have soared to distinguished eminence, if a suitable object inspired interest, and if interest stimulated them to the study and pursuit of powerful accomplishments and elevated thoughts.

Without attempting to dwell on the motives of the preference which wisdom perhaps might induce us to give to obscure States as well as to obscure conditions, it easy to prove, from the very nature of mankind, that they are impelled to emerge from that situation which they unite together, in order to multiply the collisions of understanding, and that they conquer in order to extend their power; in a word, that eager to rouse and exercise their faculties, and to enlarge in every direction the founderies of the human mind, they unanimously solicit around them the interposition of every circumstance that invigorates this impulse and seconds this desire.

These different reflections can have no weight or value, but in as much as they are countenanced by facts, by a minute and detailed knowledge of history, which continually holds up to us new objects of consideration: when we study it with a fixed view, and when guided by that eternal resemblance between man and man, we pursue the same truth through an immense diversity of places and of times. These different reflections would finally lead us to the principal object of our present discussion, the means of giving to a great nation a constitution built on order and on liberty, and of thus reconciling with the independence of republics the splendour of the fine arts, of sciences, and of letters, which are so proudly said to flourish only under the shade of monarchies. A government should be formed that would awaken genius by emulation, while it curbed the passions of faction; a government which would hold out to a superior man an object worthy of his powers, while it damped the ambition and dashed the guilty hopes of the usurper: a government, in a word, which would exhibit, as I have said before, a perfect idea of complete happiness, the re-union of every contrast. The attainment of this end should be as ardently pursued by the legislator, as it ought to be rejected by the moralist: the individual who should pretend to attain it for himself must be

mad, for chance, which it is not in his power to direct, would in every manner baffle and defeat such hopes. But governments hold, as it were, the place of chance, with respect to nations, for as they act upon the mass, their means and effects cannot be doubtful: nor does it follow from hence that we can attain to perfection in the social order; but it is of advantage that legislators should hold this end in view, however unable they may be to ascertain the road that leads to it. In the prosecution therefore of this work, whether it be performed by me, or by another hand, it is absolutely necessary to exclude every thing that savours of the spirit of party or the present circumstances, as a superstitious veneration for royalty, the just horror impressed by the crimes we have seen committed, and even our very enthusiasm for the republic, though enthusiasm in its purity be the sublimest sentiment which can possibly inform the heart of man. Were we to examine institutions in their very essence, we should soon agree that there remains but one great question to divide the opinion of thinking men, viz. whether in the combination of mixed governments we are or we are not to admit hereditary right? We all, I believe, are unanimous as to the inadmissibility of despotism, or the establishment of any power that has not for its object the happiness of all; and, doubtless, we are equally unanimous in rejecting the absurdity of

a * *demagogical* constitution, which would overturn and destroy society in the name of the very people who compose it. But some will have it that the security of liberty, that the maintenance of order, cannot subsist without the aid of an hereditary protecting power; while others acknowledge also the truth of the principle, that order, that is, obedience to justice, secures liberty: they, at the same time, imagine that the blessing of liberty may be obtained without a species of institutions which necessity alone can justify, and which reason ought to disavow; whereas reason shews us that they are not more conducive to the happiness of society than the result of natural ideas. It is on those two questions that, in my opinion, the attention of every mind should be occupied: they must be wholly separated from the contemplation of every thing we have seen, and even of every thing which we now see; in a word, from every thing connected with the revolution; for, as it has been well observed, the revolution must terminate in reasoning, and those only are conquered who are convinced.

Let, therefore, the odious epithets of *servile* and *factious*, of *conspirators* and *anarchists*, that are

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* By a *demagogical* constitution, I understand that which works the people into a continual ferment, which confounds every power; in a word, the constitution of 1793. As the term *democracy* is, in our days, taken in a variety of senses, it would not have rendered with exactness what I am desirous to express.

so liberally bestowed on mere opinions, never stain the name of men who have any personal merit to distinguish them. Our actions only are cognizable by the laws; but the moral world belongs to thought: whoever wields that weapon, may forego all others; and the man who is capable of employing it, may thereby disdain to stoop to any other means of defence.

Several works of excellent writers contain arguments in favour of modified hereditary right, as in England for example, where it constitutes two branches of the constitution, while the third power is purely representative; or as at Rome, where the political power was divided between democracy and aristocracy, the people and the senate: we ought therefore to expose the motives which induce a belief that the balance of those opposite interests can alone give stability to governments; that a man, who is conscious of possessing talents, or who sees his hands armed with authority, will naturally endeavour first at personal and afterwards at hereditary distinctions; and that consequently we ought to give a legal existence to what he will employ force to obtain. These and many other points of argument it is necessary to unfold, omitting on either side those which are supposed to be deducible from right; for the principle of right in politics is that which most unerringly leads to general happiness; but it

is proper to give a fair and candid exposition of the arguments of our adversaries, when we intend to bring them to a serious and sincere discussion.

It might be objected to them that the constituting of two opposite interests in a state has been the principal cause of the subversion of many governments: and it has been regarded as the highest perfection of political science so to measure the two opposing actions, that the aristocratic and democratic power may be exactly balanced, like two wrestlers whom an equal degree of strength renders motionless. And, indeed, the most prosperous moment of all such governments is that when these powers are thus nicely poised, and when from this perfect balance arises that rest which results from two efforts repressed one by the other. But such a state cannot be of long duration; for, following up the comparison, the instant that one of the wrestlers loses but for a minute the advantage, he is thrown down by the other, but rises again, and revenges himself, by throwing down his antagonist in his turn. Thus the Roman republic was torn and distracted, whenever a war, the ambition of an individual, or the mere operation of time, disordered this equilibrium.

We shall be told that in England there are three interests, and that this wiser combination

secures the public tranquility. But there can be no such thing as three interests in such a government: hereditary privileges and those that are not hereditary may pass under different denominations; but the division of power always proceeds on these two grounds— these are the grand motives of opposition which induce men to separate or to unite. May it not be possible for mankind, who have so long been the witness and the victim of this principle of hatred, of this germ of death, which has proved the destruction of so many states, to find out the means of terminating this struggle between aristocracy and democracy, and, instead of attempting the formation of a balance of power, which, by leaning to liberty, never fails to be finally overturned, duly to examine whether the modern notion of a representative system does not succeed in creating one interest, one vivifying principle in a state, rejecting at the same time whatever tends to democracy?

Let us suppose, at first, a very small number of men selected from among an immense nation, an election proceeding on two principles; on the necessity of their having passed through situations which discover the talents and the dispositions of the human mind, and of their possessing both an independency of fortune, and claims to the public esteem, so necessary

to support them in such situations; might not an election thus modified establish an aristocracy of the better kind, the pre-eminence and ascendancy of talents, of virtues, and of property? This kind of distinction, without constituting two classes *de jure*, which would prove, *de facto*, hostile to each other, would entrust the more enlightened with the government of their fellow men, and by raising superior characters to power, through the elective privilege of their inferiors, would assign to talent its proper place, and afford mediocrity its proper consolation; it would also interest the self-love of the multitude in the success of their rulers, it would open the field of emulation to all, while it admitted but the chosen few. The advantages of an aristocracy of birth would result from a combination of circumstances which make it more probable that in such a class is to be found the influence of generous sentiments.

The aristocracy of election, when its proceedings are conducted with wisdom and integrity, cannot fail to select men distinguished for their talents, whom it will place in the most eminent stations of society. Where is the impossibility but that a division of powers may be attended with all the advantages, without any of the inconveniencies of an opposition of interests; that two Councils, with an Executive

Directory, though temporary, may remain perfectly distinct in the discharge of their functions, that each may take a different direction from the nature of his employ, not from an *esprit de corps*, which is of a tendency very different indeed? Those persons who thus, from their respective departments in the administration of the public power, have remained separated during the period of their magistracies, may again re-unite and blend with the general mass of the nation; for no contrary interest would oppose an invincible obstacle to their re-union. Where is the impossibility but that an extensive country, far from being an impediment to such an order of things, may, on the contrary, by its very extent, be peculiarly adapted to its stability? For a successful conspiracy, or the ambition of a single individual, may suddenly seize on the citadel of a small state, and by that alone change the form of its government, while it is the impulse only of one general opinion that can rouse and call into action thirty millions of men; every thing that is effected by individuals only, or by a faction that is not warmed and informed by the public heart, is immediately crushed and overpowered by the mass, which rushes on from all quarters. It is impossible there should exist an usurper in a country, where the same man must attach to himself the public opinion from the Rhine

to the Pyrenees; the idea of a constitution, of an order of things, sanctioned and supported by general assent, can alone be a centre of unity, enabled to spread wide the influence of its power. The government of extensive countries is upheld by the enormous mass of peaceable men, and this mass is proportionally greater in a great nation than in a small country. The governors in a small country are far more multiplied in relation to the governed, and the part which each of them takes in any proceeding whatever is proportionally greater, and more easily asserted; in a word, those who persist in the unqualified assertion, that no constitution has been ever bottomed on such a basis, and that it is much wiser to adopt the forms that have already existed for ages, I would only entreat to dwell for a moment on a reflection, which, if I mistake not, deserves very particular attention.

In all human sciences we begin with complex ideas, and only attain simple ideas as we advance in the progress to perfection. Absolute ignorance in these natural combinations is not so far removed from the highest point of knowledge as a smattering of information A comparison will explain my meaning more distinctly. On the revival of letters, the first literary performances which were composed

were full of stiffness and affectation. The great writers, two ages after, practised and introduced into fashion the simple stile of writing. The speech of the savage who exclaimed, 'Shall we say to the ashes of our fathers, rise up and follow us?' bore a greater affinity to the stile of Voltaire than the turgid verses of Brebeuf or Chapelain. In mechanics, the machine at Marli* was first discovered, which, at enormous expence, raised water to the summit of a mountain. After this machine were discovered pumps, which produce the same effect, with infinitely less apparatus. Without meaning to convert a comparison into a proof, suppose that, after it has existed an hundred years in England, the idea of liberty should again have appeared in the world. The complex structure of the English government might be the highest point of perfection, which at that period it was possible to attain. Now, however, principles much more simple may produce in France, after the revolution, consequences in some respects as beneficial, in others still more advantageous. Independently of all the individual

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* The machine at Marli, formerly a royal residence in France, not far from Versailles, where, by water-works upon the Seine, water is raised for the supply of the gardens, &c.

crimes which have been perpetrated, social order itself was threatened with destruction in the course of this revolution, by the political system which was adopted. Barbarous manners are more closely connected with simple institutions, ill understood, than with those of a complicated nature. Still, however, it is true, that social order, like every other science, advances to perfection in proportion as the number of powers brought into play is diminished without weakening the effect. These considerations, and many others, would lead to a complete discussion of the nature and utility of hereditary authorities, as component parts of a constitution; and the nature and utility of constitutions admitting only temporary magistracies. It should never be forgotten that this is the only point upon which difference of sentiment exists; the remains of despotic or demogogical opinions are extravagant or criminal chimeras, which have lost all hold on the mind of every person who exercises the powers of reflection.

It would be no inconsiderable advantage, I am persuaded, to treat, in a manner purely, abstract questions, which opposite passions have alternately perverted to their own views. By examining truth, detached from men and from particular times, we attain conclusions which

afterwards may be applied with greater facility to present circumstances. After having executed a work of this nature, however, in whatever general point of view these great questions might be considered, it would be impossible to refrain from a particular application, and to conclude without viewing them in their relation to France and the rest of Europe. Every consideration invites France to remain a republic. Every consideration imperiously prohibits Europe to follow her example. One of the most ingenious performances of our time, that of Bejamin Constant, has treated in a most complete manner the question of the present state of France. Two motives of feeling strike my mind with particular force upon this subject. Can the people of France wish to undergo the miseries of a new revolution, in order to supersede that which establishes the republic? Is the courage of so many armies and the blood of so many heroes to be lavished in the name of a chimera, which should leave nothing behind it but the memory of the crimes which it has cost?

France then ought to persevere in that grand experiment, the calamities of which are passed, the hop s of which are in futurity. But can Europe be inspired with sufficient horror for revolutions? Those who detest the principles

of the French constitution, who are the avowed enemies of every idea of liberty, who reckon it criminal to love a republic even in imagination, as if the Catos, the Brutuses, the Sydneys were inseparably confounded with the criminals who have disgraced France: those intolerant and fanatical beings can never convince, by their vehement declamations, the philosophers of foreign countries. But let Europe listen with respect to the friends of liberty, and of that republican government in France which they embraced with zeal and alacrity, when it was no longer criminal to adopt it, when the wish might be indulged without shedding a drop of blood. No monarchical government, at present, contains such inveterate abuses but that a single day of revolution would extort more tears than all the miseries it was intended to remedy. To wish for a revolution is to devote to death alike the innocent and the guilty; it is perhaps to condemn to destruction the object we hold most dear! Never, too, do we ourselves obtain the end which we had proposed to purchase with that dreadful sacrifice. In the terrible movements with which revolutions are attended, no man is able to complete the enterprise he has begun. No man can flatter himself with the hope that he shall be able to regulate an impulse, of which the nature of things

necessarily assumes the guidance. The slave of ambition, who should imagine that he could steer his course with success through the events of a whole revolution, would not be less frantic than the Englishman who endeavoured to descend in his boat the falls of the Rhine at Schaffouse. *

Permit us in France to fight and conquer, let us submit to torture and to death in the sacrifice of our warmest affections, our dearest attachments, destined, perhaps, one day to revive for the astonishment and admiration of the world. At least, however, allow an age to pass over our destinies, and then you will know whether we have acquired the true science of the happiness of mankind ; you will then know whether the old man had formed a just estimate of human policy, or the young man had disposed, to the best advantage, of his property for the future ! Alas ! is it not fortunate for you that a whole nation has thus placed itself as the vanguard of the human species, to brave all prejudicies, to try all principles ? Attend ye who belong to the present generation, keep far from your societies animosity, proscription,

* This attempt was actually made some years ago by an English nobleman ; but his rashness cost him his life.

and death. No duty can exact sacrifices like these. To shun them, on the contrary, is a law which every duty combines to impose.

I hope I may be forgiven for having allowed myself thus to be hurried beyond my subject; but who can live, who can write at the present moment, without feeling and reflecting upon the revolution of France?

I have marked out an imperfect sketch of the work which I projected. The first part which I now deliver to the public is founded upon the study of our own heart, and upon the observations made upon the character of mankind in every age. In the study of government we must propose happiness as the end, and liberty as the means. In the moral science of man, independence of mind is the principal object to be cultivated; the happiness to be enjoyed is the consequence which it may afford. The man who should devote his life to the pursuit of perfect felicity would be the most wretched of beings; the nation which should only direct its efforts to the attainment of the highest abstract point of metaphysical liberty, would be the most miserable nation in the universe. Legislators then ought to calculate and to direct circumstances; individuals should endeavour to render themselves independent of them: governments should aim at the real happiness of all; and

moralists ought to teach individuals to dispense with happiness.

In the very order of things some good is necessarily produced for the mass, and yet there is no felicity for individuals. Every thing concurs to the preservation of the species, every thing conspires to oppose the desires of the individual; and governments, in some respects representatives of the scheme which obtain in the system of nature, may attain that perfection of which the general order furnishes the example. But moralists, addressing themselves, as I conceive, to men singly, to all those individual beings carried along in the universal moment, cannot promise them personally any enjoyment but that which ever depends upon themselves. There is considerable advantage to be obtained from proposing, as the object of our efforts upon ourselves, the most perfect philosophical independence. Even useless attempts leave behind them some salutary effects. Acting at once upon the whole of the being which constitutes ourselves, we are not startled by the apprehension, as in experiments upon nations, of disjoining, of separating, of opposing to each other the various component parts of the body politic. In our breasts we have no compromise to make with external obstacles. We calculate our own strength, we triumph, or we abandon

the contest. Every thing is simple; every thing even is possible; for if it is allowed to consider a whole nation as a people of philosophers, it is true that every individual may aspire at that character, and flatter himself with its attainment.

I am prepared for the various objections of feeling and of argument which may be urged against the system inculcated in this first part. Nothing, it is true, is more repugnant to the first emotions of youth than the idea of rendering ourselves independent of the affections of others. The earliest impulse is to consecrate life to acquire the love of friends, and to captivate the favour of the public. At that period of life we seem to think that we have never dedicated enough of our time to please those we love, that we have never sufficiently proved how necessary their welfare is to our existence. Unwearied industry, incessant services, are but poor displays of that ardour of soul, that irresistible necessity which impels us to devote our whole attention, to surrender our whole being to others. We figure to ourselves a futurity wholly composed of those ties which we have formed, we rely with the more implicit confidence upon their duration, because we ourselves are incapable of ingratitude. We are conscious of possessing

right to acknowledgement, we depend upon friendship thus constituted more than upon any other tie in nature; every thing is means, this alone is the end. We wish likewise to obtain the esteem of the public, and our friends seem pledges for the attainment of our wishes. We have done every thing to promote their advantage; they know it, they confess it. Why then will truth, the truth impressed by experience, fail to convince the world of our sincerity? What! can it fail to be ultimately recognised? The innumerable proofs which from every quarter conspire to establish its reality must at length triumph over the fabrications of calumny. Our words, our accents, the air we breathe, all seem to you to bear the impression of what we really are, and we deem it impossible to be long exposed to erroneous interpretations. It is with a feeling of unlimited confidence like this, that we launch with flying sails into the ocean of life. All that knowledge has witnessed, all that report has communicated to you, of the bad dispositions of a great number of men, appears in your mind like history, like the lessons in morality which we are taught, but never have experienced. We never think of applying any of these general ideas to our particular situation. Every thing that befalls us, every thing which we observe around

us is classed as exception. The talent we may possess obtains no influence upon our conduct. The voice of the heart, the impulse of the soul, is alone felt and obeyed. Those facts which we ourselves have never experienced are known only to our understanding, without ever entering into life, and guiding our actions.

At the age of twenty-five, however, precisely at that period when life ceases to enlarge, when our being is fixed, a severe change takes place in our existence. Men begin to judge of our situation. All then is not future in our destiny. In many respects our lot is fixed, and men then reflect whether it be for their advantage to connect their fortune with ours. If such a union present to their view fewer advantages than they had imagined, if in any manner their expectation is disappointed, at the moment they have resolved to separate themselves from you, they are anxious to justify to their own minds, by some pretext, the injury to you which they are about to commit. They pry into your character, they endeavour to discover a thousand defects in it, in order to acquit themselves of the greatest defect by which a man can be disgraced. The friends who incur the guilt of ingratitude endeavour to degrade you in order to justify themselves; they deny the sincerity of your attachment, they charge you

with officiousness: in a word, they employ separate and contradictory means to throw over your conduct, and their own, a kind of uncertain and equivocal character, which every man will explain as he affects. What a multitude of painful feelings then assails the heart of him who had indulged the fond wish and cherished the delightful plan of living in the affections of others, and finds himself deceived in this illusion!

Your system of life is attacked, every successive blow shakes to its foundations the unity of the whole arrangement. *And he too abandons me*, is a painful idea which gives to the last tie which is broken a value and an interest it had not till then possessed. The public also, whose favour had been experienced, loses all the indulgence it had testified. It loves that success which it anticipates, it becomes hostile to that of which itself is the cause. What it formerly had supported by its authority it now attacks; what it formerly had encouraged by its protection, it now labours to destroy. This injustice, of which opinion is guilty in a thousand ways, at once excites agonizing sensations. This individual who defames you with malignity, is too unworthy for you to regret his suffrage; but every petty detail of a great vexation, the history of which unfolds to your view, renews

your anguish and your suffering; though aware of its inevitable term, you nevertheless experience some painful emotion at every step of the progress. In a word, the affections of the heart are withered, the gay colouring of life fades away. Faults are contracted, which disgust us equally with ourselves and with others, which discourage us from the prosecution of that system of perfection with which our bosoms once proudly swelled. Henceforth we know not to what source we ought to repair, what course we ought to pursue. Once having trusted without discretion, we are disposed to suspect without cause. Is it sensibility, is it virtue, that is nothing but a phantom? And does that sublime complaint which Brutus uttered in the fields of Philippi infer, either that we ought to abandon that rigid morality, which we had imposed upon our conduct, or does it prescribe to us self-murder?

At this fatal epoch the earth, as it were, seems to sink under our feet. More uncertain of the future than even when the prospect was dimmed by the clouds of infancy; we entertain doubts of all that we imagined we had known, and anew begin our existence; with this difference, that we no longer have hope as a companion to cheer us in the journey. It is at that period of life when the circle of enjoy-

ment has been explored, and the third part of life hardly attained, that this book is calculated to be useful. It is not fit to be read sooner; for I myself did not begin, or even conceive the design of this work, till I had reached that age. It, perhaps, may be objected to me likewise, that in attempting to subdue the passions I am labouring to extinguish the principle of the most glorious of human actions, sublime discoveries, and generous sentiments. Although I am not entirely of this opinion, I admit that there is something elevated in passion; that while it continues, it adds to the superiority of man; that under its dominion he is able to accomplish whatever he proposes; so much is firm and persevering *will* an active force in the moral order of things. Man, then, hurried away by something more powerful than himself, wastes his life, but employs it with greater energy. If the soul is to be considered only as an impulse, this impulse is more lively when excited by passion. If men destitute of passions must be roused by the interest of some grand spectacle, if the gladiators must mutually murder each other before their eyes, while they are to be nothing more than the spectators of these shocking combats, it unquestionably is necessary to enflame by every possible contrivance these unfortunate

beings whose impetuous feelings are destined to animate or to desolate the theatre of the world. But what advantage can they derive from this course, what general happiness can be obtained by the encouragement thus given to the passions of the soul? Every emotion necessary to social life, every impulse necessary to virtue, might exist without this destructive spring.

But it may be said that it is to guide, not to conquer these passions that our efforts ought to be directed. For my part, I do not understand how it is possible to direct that which only exists while it governs without controul. Man is capable but of two states. Either he can rely upon governing within his own breast, and then there are no passions; or he is conscious that there reigns within him a power superior to himself; and upon this, then, he must be wholly dependent. All these compromises with passion are completely imaginary. Like real tyrants, it must either be enthroned in power, or subdued in fetters. It never was my intention, however, to devote this work to the extinction of all the passions; men are imbued with them at their birth. Still it has been my principal endeavour to present a system of life which should not be wholly destitute of pleasurable feelings at that period when

the hopes of positive happiness in this state of existence disappear. That system is suited only to those whose character is naturally subject to the influence of passion, and who have struggled to regain the empire of themselves. Many of its enjoyments belong only to souls originally ardent, and the necessity of its sacrifices cannot be felt but by those who have been unhappy. Indeed, if man were not born with passions, what should he have to fear, what efforts should he be called upon to exert, what could the feelings of his mind present to occupy the moralist, or fill him with apprehension for the fate of human kind? Am I liable also to the reproach of having failed to treat separately of the enjoyments attached to the performance of our duties, and the anguish inflicted by the remorse which attends the commission of wrong, or the guilt of having neglected those duties to which we stand engaged?

These two primary ideas of our existence apply equally to all situations, to all characters; and the point which I was principally anxious to demonstrate, is the relation which obtains between the passions of man and the agreeable or painful impressions of which he is conscious in his heart. In the prosecution of this plan, I conceive, at the same time, that I have proved that there is no happiness without

virtue. That we arrive at this conclusion by every path we pursue, is a fresh evidence of its truth. In the analysis of the various moral affections of man, allusions will sometimes occur to the revolution of France. Every remembrance which the mind preserves is tinged with this terrible event. It was my wish likewise to render this first part useful to the second, to prepare, by the examination of men individually, to enter upon the calculation of the effects of their union in societies. I cherished the hope, I again repeat, that by labouring to promote the moral independence of man, we should facilitate the attainment of his political liberty; since every restriction, which it is necessary to impose upon this liberty, is always prescribed by the effervescence of some one of the human passions.

In a word, whatever opinion may be formed of my plan, so much is certain, that my only object has been to combat misery under every appearance it may assume; to study the thoughts, the feelings, the institutions which produce pain to mankind; to investigate what are the reflections, the employments, the combinations which are calculated to diminish in any degree the severity of the sufferings to which the human soul is exposed. The image of misfortune, in whatever aspect it appears, haunts my imagina-

tion and tears my heart. Alas! I myself have experienced so bitterly what it is to be miserable, that a susceptibility inexpressibly tender, a disquietude mingled with sorrow, steal upon my heart, at the idea of the sufferings which any fellow creature endures I am penetrated with sympathetic emotions at the prospect of those inevitable vexations, of the torments which spring from the imagination, the disappointments which the just man undergoes, and even the remorse which the guilty suffers; at the view of those wounds of the heart, of all griefs the most poignant, and those bitter regrets which we blush to own without ceasing less acutely to feel. In a word, I am penetrated with sorrow at the prospect of those evils which draw forth the tears of anguish, those tears which the ancients collected in a consecrated urn—Such was the veneration with which they viewed the august spectacle of human sorrow. Alas! It is not enough to have sworn, that within the limits which bound our existence, whatever injustice, whatever injury, we may be doomed to suffer, we should never voluntarily occasion a painful sensation to any human being: we likewise should never voluntarily forego the possibility of solacing a single woe. We ought also to try whether any shadow of talent, whether any power of meditation we possess, may not con-

tribute to the discovery of that language with which melancholy gently agitates the soul; whether we might not assist to discover that philosophic height which is beyond the reach of the weapons which annoy. In a word, if time and study can unfold any doctrine, by which we may be enabled to demonstrate political principles with that evidence which in future will rescue them from being the subject of two religions, and, consequently, of the most sanguinary of all furies; it should seem that the world would be then furnished with a complete example of all those moral shields which protect the fate of man from the dominion of misfortune.

OF THE PASSIONS.

SECTION THE FIRST.

CHAP. I.

OF THE LOVE OF GLORY.

OF all the passions of which the human heart is susceptible, there is none which possesses so striking a character as the Love of Glory. The traces of its operations may be discovered in the primitive nature of man, but it is only in the midst of society that this sentiment acquires its true force. In order to deserve the name of passion, it must absorb all the other affections of the soul; and its pleasures, as well as its pains, result only from the entire developement of its power.

According to that sublimity of virtue which seeks in our own conscience for the motive and the end of conduct, the love of glory is the most exalted principle which can actuate the soul. I leave to the signification of this word all its

proper greatness, by preserving its connexion with the real value of the actions which it ought to inspire. Indeed true glory cannot be obtained by a relative celebrity. We always summon the universe and posterity to confirm the title of so august a crown. It cannot be preserved, then, but by genius, or by virtue. When I come to treat of ambition, I shall take an opportunity to speak of that fleeting success which may imitate or resemble glory. At present, it is to glory itself, that is, to that which is truly just and great, that I intend at present to direct my enquiries; and, in order to determine its influence upon happiness, I shall not hesitate to display it in all the seducing brilliancy of its charms.

The honourable and sincere friend of glory proposes a magnanimous treaty with the human race. He thus addresses them: "I will consecrate my talents to your service. My ruling passion will incessantly impel me to communicate happiness to the greatest portion of mankind by the fortunate result of my efforts. Even countries and nations unknown to me shall have right to the fruit of my wakeful toils. Every thinking being possesses common relations to me; and, free from the contracted influence of individual sentiments, I measure

the degree of my happiness only by the extent of my beneficence. As the reward of this devoted attachment, all I ask is, that you celebrate its author, that you command fame to discharge your debt of gratitude. Virtue, I know, constitutes its own enjoyment and reward. For me, however, I require your assistance, in order to obtain that reward which is necessary to my happiness, that the glory of my name may be united to the merit of my actions." What openness, what simplicity in this contract! How is it possible that nations should never have observed it with fidelity, and that genius alone should have fulfilled its conditions?

Doubtless it is a most fascinating enjoyment, to make the universe resound with our name, to exist so far beyond ourselves that we can reconcile our minds to any illusion, both as to the nature of space and the duration of life, and believe that we constitute some of the metaphysical attributes of the Eternal. The soul swells with elevated delight, by the habitual consciousness that the whole attention of a great number of men is directed towards you, that you exist in their hopes, that every idea that rises in your mind may influence the destiny of multitudes, that great events ripen

and unfold themselves in your breast, and in the name of the people who rely upon your knowledge demand the most lively attention to your own thoughts. The acclamations of the multitude agitate the soul at once by the reflexions which they inspire, and by the commotions which they produce. All these animating forms under which glory presents itself to our view, must transport youth with hope and inflame it with emulation. The paths which lead to this great end are strewed with charms. The exertions which the ardour of attaining it prescribes, are themselves accompanied with delight; and in the career of success, sometimes the most fortunate incidents with which it is attended arise from the interests by which it was preceded, and which communicate an active energy to life.

The glory which results from literary performances or from great actions is subject to different combinations: the first, borrowing from solitary pleasures, may participate in their advantages. But it is not this species of glory which displays in striking colours all the symptoms of this elevated passion. It does not possess that commanding genius, which in an instant sows and reaps, and is crowned with the reward; whose overpowering eloquence or whose invincible

courage decides in an instant the fate of ages and of empires. It is not that emotion, all powerful in its effects, which commands obedience by inspiring similar sentiments, and which compresses in the present moment all the enjoyments of the future. The genius which consists in action is exempted from the obligation of awaiting that tardy justice which Time brings in his train. It places Glory in front, to guide its course, like the pillar of fire which formerly enlightened the march of the Israelites The celebrity to be obtained by literary productions is rarely cotemporary; but even when this fortunate distinction is attained, as there is nothing instantaneous in its effects, nothing ardent in its splendour, the literary career cannot, like active glory, produce the complete display of its physical and moral force, secure the exercise of all its faculties, and, in a word, intoxicate by the certainty of the power with which it is endowed. In order, then, to judge with more precision of the obstacles and the hardships it has to encounter, we must confine our observation to the highest point of happiness which the love of glory can attain.

The principal difficulty, then, in all governments where hereditary distinctions are established, is the combination of those circumstances which communicate splendour to life. The

efforts which are necessary to rise from an obscure situation, in order to perform a part which we have not been called upon to undertake, offend the majority of men. Those who, by their rank, are placed within reach of the most distinguished offices, conceive it a mark of contempt to themselves, when they see a man indulge the hope of crossing the boundary which separates him from those distinctions, and attaining by his talents the highest elevation to which their destiny can aspire. Those of the same class with the adventurer, those who have resigned themselves to their lot, and attributing this determination to their wisdom, not to the mediocrity of their abilities, stigmatize an opposite conduct as absurd, and without allowing for the diversity of talents, conceive themselves equally qualified to act in the same circumstances.

In monarchies of an aristocratical constitution, the multitude, from the spirit of domination, sometimes delight to advance the man whom chance has abandoned. The same spirit, however, forbids them to renounce their right over that existence which they have created. The people consider this existence as the work of their own hands; and unless fate, superstition, magic, in a word, some power independent of men, does not guide the fortune

of him who in a monarchical government owes his elevation to the opinion of the people, he will not long preserve a glory which is at once created and rewarded by the public suffrage, which derives from the same source its existence and its celebrity. The people will not maintain their own work, nor will yield submission to a force of which they feel themselves the chief support. Those who, in such an order of things, are born in the privileged class, in some respects have many useful advantages connected with their situation.

But, in the first place, the chance of talents is narrowed, both in proportion to the number, and still more, that species of negligence which certain advantages inspire. But when genius elevates the man whom the ranks of monarchy had previously separated from the rest of his fellow citizens, independently of the obstacles common to all, there are some which are personal to his situation. Rivals among that limited number to which you belong, those who consider themselves in many respects your equals, press close, more close around you; and, should you be inclined to remove them to a distance, nothing is more difficult than to know to what degree we ought to cultivate the desire of popularity while we enjoy unpopular distinctions. It is

almost impossible always to know with certainty the degree of deference we ought to show for the general opinion. That opinion, certain of its unlimited power, and conscious of it, inspires modesty, and it demands respect without flattery. It is pleased with gratitude, but is disgusted with servility; cloyed with the possession of sovereign power, it loves that proud and independent character, which for a moment seems to dispute its authority only to renew the enjoyment which it affords These general difficulties are felt with double severity by the nobleman who, under a monarchical government, is desirous to acquire true glory. If he disdains popularity, he is hated. A plebeian, in a democratic state, my obtain admiration by braving popularity. But if a nobleman pursue a similar course in a monarchical state, instead of acquiring the reputation of courage, he will only incur the imputation of pride. If, after all, in order to avoid this reproach, he cultivates popularity, he will incessantly be liable to incur either suspicion or ridicule. Men are not pleased to see personal interest wholly abandoned; and that which, when it rises to a certain height, is contrary to their nature, is treated with contempt.

Of all the advantages we possess, life alone can be sacrificed with renown. The renuncia-

tion of others, although much more rare and more estimable, is represented as a kind of cheat; and although it infers a much higher degree of devotion when it is called a cheat, it no longer excites the enthusiasm of those who are the objects of the sacrifice. The nobles then, placed between the nation and the monarch, between their political existence and their general interest, with difficulty obtain glory in any other situation but that of the army. The most of the considerations which have been mentioned do not apply to military success. Of the attributes of his nature, war leaves to man only his physical faculties. While this state continues, he surrenders himself to the impulse of that valour, that enterprize, that talent which secures victory, in the same manner as weak bodies follow the attraction of the greater. The moral being confers no superiority in the immediate conflict of battle; and for this reason, soldiers display more constancy in their attachment to their generals than citizens in their gratitude to their rulers.

In republics, if they are founded upon the basis of aristocracy alone, all the members who compose one class form an obstacle to the glory of each individual. That spirit of moderation which Montesquieu has so justly assigned as the

principle of aristocratic republics, represses the soaring flight of genius. A great man, actuated by the desire of displaying his superiority, would give a precipitate impulse to the equal and uniform movement of these governments. As utility, likewise, is the principle of admiration in a state where great talents cannot find scope for their exertion in a manner that would conduce to the advantage of all; they have no opportunity to unfold themselves, they are extinguished, or they are confined within certain limits which never permit them to attain celebrity. Strangers never hear of a name of peculiar distinction which the government of Venice has produced, or which rises to eminence in the wise and paternal govenment of the republic of Berne. The same spirit has for several ages continued to guide a variety of different individuals; and were a man to impress upon the government his own particular character, violent concussions would necessarily result from a constitution, the uniformity of which at once secures its tranquillity, and constitutes its strength.

With regard to popular republics, it is necessary to distinguish two epochs in their existence, which are completely different; that which preceded the art of printing, and that

which is cotemporary with the greatest possible extension of the liberty of the press. That which has preceded the art of printing must be favourable to the ascendancy of one man, knowledge not being then generally diffused. He who was endowed with superior talents, a vigorous understanding, possessed great advantages for acting upon the minds of the multitude. The secret of causes was then unknown; investigation had not yet changed into positive knowledge the magic of all their effects. Accordingly men were liable to be struck with astonishment, and, of consequence, were easily led. They believed that one individual among them was necessary to the whole body. Hence arose the formidable dangers to which liberty was exposed; hence the never-ceasing factions by which states were distracted; for wars of opinion finish with the events which decide them, and with the discussions by which they are explained; but the power of superior men is renewed with every generation, and desolates or subjects the nation which resigns itself without controul to this enthusiasm.

When the liberty of the press, however, and what is still more, the multiplicity of newspapers, every day makes public the ideas which have circulated the preceding day, it is almost impossible

there can exist, in such a country, what is called glory There may be esteem; for esteem does not destroy equality; and he, who extends it to another, acts upon judgment, instead of resigning its exercise. But an enthusiastic attachment to men is banished. There are defects in characters, which, formerly, were discovered either by the light of history, or by a small number of cotemporary philosophers, whom the general opinion had not misled. In the present state of the world, however, he who endeavours to distinguish himself is at variance with the self-love of others: every step which raises him above the level kindles the wish to bring him down from his eminence. The mass of enlightened men assume a kind of active pride which destroys the success of individuals. If we wish to investigate the causes of the great ascendant which superior genius obtained at Athens and Rome, of the almost blind empire which in ancient times it exercised over the multitude, it will be seen that opinion was never fixed by means of opinion itself; that it was always owing to something different from itself, to the support of some superstition, that its permanence was ensured. Kings have been known, who, to the end of their days, preserved the glory which they had acquired. But the people then

believed that royalty was of divine origin. Sometimes we find Numa inventing a fable, in order to secure the acceptance of those laws which wisdom had dictated, relying more upon credulity than upon the intrinsic merit of his code. The most renowned Roman generals, when they intended to fight a battle, declared, that the observation of the flight of birds compelled them to engage. It was in this manner that the great men of antiquity concealed the dictates of their genius under the appearance of superstition, avoiding that conduct which would have led men to judge, although they knew that they were right. In a word, every discovery which knowledge has produced, by enriching the mass, diminishes the empire of the individual. Human kind is the heir of genius, and the truly great men are those who have rendered such superior beings as themselves less necessary to future generations. The more the mind is allowed to expatiate in the future career of possible perfectibility, the more we see the advantages of understanding surpassed by positive knowledge, and the spring of virtue more powerful than the passion of glory. It will not, perhaps, yet be found that the present age affords the idea of such a progress; but we must see in the actual effect the future cause, in order to judge completely of an event. He

who, in the mines where metals are concocted, sees only the devouring fire which seems to consume every thing, is unacquainted with the course of nature; and cannot paint to his fancy the future but by multiplying the present. In whatever light, however, these reflections may be considered, I return to the general considerations upon the obstacles and the misfortunes connected with the passion for glory, which are applicable to all times and to all countries.

When the difficulties of the first steps are surmounted, two parties immediately form, respecting the reputation of the individual concerned; not that there are different modes of judging of the same conduct, but because ambition connects itself with one side or the other. He who is inclined to become the adversary of great success, remains passive as long as its brilliancy remains undiminished. During the same period it is that friends are most indefatigable in favour of him who has gained distinction. They are fatigued with their previous exertions, when the moment of misfortune arrives; at a time when the principle of novelty alone is sufficient to weary the public with the uniform repetition of the same panegyrics. Enemies enter the lists with fresh arms, while

friends have blunted theirs, by making a vain parade of them round the triumphal car.

It may be asked, why is friendship less persevering than animosity? The reason is, that the one may be abandoned in a great variety of modes; while, in the other, success alone can remove the danger and the shame which would result from giving up the object. Friends can so easily attribute to the goodness of their own hearts the excess of their enthusiasm, and ascribe to the neglect of their advice the last misfortunes which their friend has sustained; there are so many ways in which a man can take credit for abandoning a friend, that the slightest difficulties are sufficient to determine a man to pursue that course. But hatred, on the other hand, from the first step which it takes, engaged without the possibility of retreat, is resolved to employ all the resources of desperate situations; those situations from which nations as well as individuals almost always escape; because, then, even the coward sees no salvation but in the exercise of his courage.

In reviewing with attention the very small number of exceptions to the inconstancy of public favour, we are astonished to find, that it is to circumstances, and never to ability, that

they are to be ascribed. The feeling of a present danger may have compelled the people to delay their injustice; a premature death has sometimes preceded the moment of its execution; but the aggregate of observation which constitutes the code of experience, proves that the life of man, so short in itself, is still of longer duration than the judgments and the affections of his cotemporaries. The great man, who attains the period of old age, must traverse many epochs of various or contradictory opinions. These oscillations cease with the passions by which they were produced. Still we live in the midst of them, and their concussion, which can have no influence on the judgment of posterity, destroys that present happiness which is immediately within our reach. The events of chance, those which none of the powers of thought can controul, are, nevertheless, considered by public opinion as within the direction of genius. Admiration is a kind of fanaticism which expects miracles. It will not consent to allow the man, on whom it fixes, a place inferior to others, it will not renounce the exercise of its understanding, to believe and obey him, but, by ascribing to him something supernatural which cannot be compared to human faculties. In order to guard against such an error, it is necessary for us to be modest and just, to re-

cognise at once the limits of genius, and its superiority over ourselves. But when it becomes necessary to reason upon reverses, to explain them by describing obstacles, to excuse them by pleading misfortunes, enthusiasm is vanished. Like the imagination, it must be struck with external objects, and success is the pageantry of genius. The public delight to heap favours upon him who already possesses abundance. As the Sultan of Arabia, dreading the contagion of fatality, abandoned his friend, when persecuted by calamity; so reverse of fortune drives away the ambitious, the weak, the indifferent: in a word, all who, with whatever justice, imagine that the splendour of glory ought to strike unconsciously, that it ought to command the tribute it requires; that glory is the joint production of the gifts of nature and of chance, and as admiration is not that which every man feels as a necessity, he who is desirous of exciting that sentiment, must obtain it from surprise, not from reflection, and must owe it to the effects which talents produce, much more than to their real value.

If the reverses of fortune dissolve the charm of enthusiasm, what must be the consequence, if to this be added the defects which are often found combined with the most eminent quali-

ties? What a vast field for the prying curiosity of little minds! How they plume themselves upon having foreseen what yet they hardly comprehend! How much more advantageous would have been the measures which they recommended! What illumination they derive from the event! How many satisfactory recollections they enjoy in criticising the conduct of another! As none view them with any attention, nobody thinks them worthy of attack. Yet who could believe it? they consider this silence as the proof of their superiority; because a battle has been lost, they consider themselves as the victors, and the disasters of a great man are converted into palms to adorn fools. And is it really possible? Can opinion be formed of suffrages like these? Yes, cotemporary glory is submitted to their decision, for it is characterised by the enthusiasm of the multitude. Real merit is independent of every thing; but the reputation acquired by that merit obtains the name of glory only by the noise of the acclamations of the multitude. If the Romans were insensible to the eloquence of Cicero, his genius remains to us; but where, during his life, will you find his glory? The merit of geometricians being only within the capacity of their equals to judge, they obtain from a small number of learned men incontestible titles to the admira-

tion of their cotemporaries. The glory of actions, however, must be popular. Soldiers judge of the merit of their general, the nation of its minister. Whoever requires the suffrage of others, has at once placed his life in the power of calculation and of chance; to such a degree, that the labours of calculation cannot secure him from the accidents of chance, and the accidents of chance cannot exempt him from the pains of calculation.

But no, may it be said, the sentence of the multitude is impartial, since it is influenced by no personal, no envious passion; its impulse, therefore, must be just. For this very reason, however, that its movements are natural and spontaneous, they belong to the imagination; a weakness, in their estimation, obscures the splendour of a virtue; a suspicion is sufficient to throw them under the dominion of terror; extravagant promises are preferred to prudent services; the complaints of one individual affect them more powerfully than the silent gratitude of the great majority. They are fickle, because they are the creatures of passion: quick to feel the emotions of passion, because men assembled in bodies communicate with each other only by means of this electricity, and contribute nothing to the common stock but their sentiments. It is not the wisdom of any individual, but the

general impulse of the whole, which leads to action, and this impulse is communicated by the most fanatical of the whole. One idea may be compounded of various reflections; a sentiment springs perfect and entire from the soul in which it is felt. The only opinion which the multitude by whom it is adopted displays, is the injustice of one man exercised by the audacity of all, that audacity which springs from the consciousness of strength, and the impossibility of being subjected to any kind of personal responsibility.

The spectacle which France has exhibited renders these observations more striking. But in every age, the man who is fond of glory has been subjected to the democratical yoke. It was from the nation alone that he received his powers; it was by his election that he received his crown; and whatever might be his right to wear it, when the people withdrew their suffrages from the man of genius, he might protest, but he reigned no longer. No matter! may some ardent spirits exclaim, "Did there exist but one chance of success against a thousand probabilities of disappointment, it were better to attempt a career which loses itself in the skies, and which gives to man, when he has ceased to live, all that human memory can rescue from the past!" One day of glory is so

multiplied by our imagination, that it may be sufficient for a whole life. The most noble of all duties are performed as we traverse the path which leads to glory, and the human race would have remained without benefactors if this sublime emulation had not encouraged their efforts!

In early times, I am persuaded that the love of fame performed less benefit to mankind than the simple impulse of obscure virtues, o persevering researches. The greatest discoveries have been made in the retirement of the man of letters; and the most illustrious actions, dictated by the spontaneous emotions of the soul, are often to be found in the history of a life that has continued unknown to fame. It is, therefore, only in its relation to him by whom it is felt, that the passion for glory ought to be considered. By a kind of metaphysical abstraction, it is often said that glory is better than happiness. This assertion, however, can only be understood by the help of the accessary ideas which are connected with it. In this view, the enjoyments of private life are placed in opposition to the splendour of an elevated existence. But to give to any thing the preference over happiness would be an absolute solecism in morals. The virtuous man makes great sacrifices only to avoid the pain of re-

morse, and to secure to himself the internal reward of his own conscience. In a word, the felicity of man is more necessary to him than life; since he will commit suicide, to escape from misery. As it is true, then, that to speak of chusing wretchedness is an expression which in itself implies a contradiction, the passion of glory, like every other feeling, must be judged by its influence upon happiness.

Lovers, even ambitious men, may at some moments conceive that they have attained the summit of felicity. As the term of their hopes is known, they ought to be happy, at least, at the moment when it is attained. But even this short-lived enjoyment can never belong to the man who aims at glory. Its limits are fixed by no feeling, by no circumstance. Alexander, after having conquered the world, wept because he could not extend even to the stars the splendour of his name. This passion lives only in the future; it possesses only in hope; and if it has frequently been adduced as one of the strongest proofs of the immortality of the soul, it is because it seems to aspire to reign over the infinity of space and the eternity of time. If glory is a moment stationary, it falls back in the opinion of men, and even in the estimation of him to whom it belongs. The possession of

it so forcibly agitates the soul, to such a degree enflames all its faculties, that a moment's calm in external objects serves only to direct upon himself all the activity of his mind. Repose is so distant, the void is so near, that the cessation of action is even the greatest misfortune to be apprehended. As the pleasures of glory never contain any thing satisfactory, the mind is filled only with their expectation; and those which it obtains, serve only to bring it nearer to those which it desires. If the height of greatness were even attained, an accidental circumstance, the refusal of a mark of respect even from the obscure, is sufficient to excite vexation and envy. Haman, the conqueror of the Jews, was miserable because he was unable to bend the stubborn pride of Mordecai. This conquering passion esteems only that by which it is resisted. It requires that admiration which is refused, as the only species superior to that which it has received. The whole power of imagination is displayed in it, because no feeling of the heart serves at intervals to carry it back to reality. When it has attained its object, its torments multiply, because its greatest charm, consisting in that activity which it requires every moment, one of its principles, is overthrown when this activity is no longer employed.

All the passions, no doubt, have common characters, but none of them leaves so much pain behind it as the disappointment of glory. To man there is nothing absolute in nature, he judges only from comparison. Even physical pain is subject to this law. Whatever then is most violent, either in pleasure or in pain, is occasioned by contrast. What contrast, however, can be more terrible than the possession or the loss of glory! He whose fame once pervaded the whole world sees nothing around him but a waste oblivion. A lover sheds no tears but to the memory of what he has lost. But the whole conduct of men, to him who once drew the attention of the universe, displays only ingratitude and neglect.

The passion of glory swells the feelings and the understanding beyond their natural strength. Far, however, from affording pleasure, the return to the natural state of the mind is a sensation of debasement and death. The enjoyments of common life have been witnessed without being felt, and they can no more be found in remembrance. It is not by reason or by melancholy that we are brought back to them, but by necessity, that fatal power which

breaks whatever it bends! One of the characteristics of this protracted misery is, that we end with self-reproach. So long as we view only the reproaches which others deserve, the soul may expatiate beyond itself. Repentance, however, concentrates every thought; and in this kind of pain the volcano closes, only to consume within. The life of a celebrated man consists of so many actions, that it is impossible for him to have so much strength of philosophy, or so much force of pride, as to exempt his own understanding from the reproach of every error. The part in his mind assuming the place which the future occupies, his imagination is broken against that firm settime, and leads him in retrospect through wilds as dreary as the happy fields, which hope once painted to his wiew, were delightful.

The man once covered with glory, who desires to renounce the memory of what he has been, and to attach himself to private life, can neither accustom himself nor others to consider him in his new situation. Simple ideas are not to be enjoyed by effort. In order to taste the happiness they are calculated to afford, a combination of circumstances, which banishes every other desire, is necessary.

Man, accustomed to actions which history will record, can no longer be interested by an ordinary life. He no longer displays those emotions by which his character was formerly distinguished, he no longer relishes existence, but resigns himself to it. The sorrows of the heart long continue the object of confidential communication, because to cherish them is honourable, as they are connected with too many associations in the mind of others, to allow them to be considered in conversation as mere personal topics. But as philosophy and pride ought to overcome or to conceal the regret occasioned even by the most noble ambition, the man who feels it never can suffer himself to confess it in its fullest extent. Constant attention to our own feelings is a series of enjoyment during prosperity; but a habitual source of pain to him who again has sunk to a private station. In a word, LOVE, that blessing, whose celestial nature alone prevents it from uniting with the whole of human destiny—Love is no longer a blessing that can be enjoyed by him who has long been governed by the passion for glory. It is not that his soul has become callous; but it is too vast to be filled by a single object. Besides, the reflexions we are led to make upon men in general, when they are connected with us by public relations, render im-

possible that kind of illusion which is necessary to see an individual at an infinite distance from all others. Great losses, too far from binding men more closely to the advantages they still have left, at once loosen all ties of attachment. We can only sustain the mind in that kind of independence which excludes all comparison between the present and the past. The genius who can adore and possess glory, rejects every thing which could supersede the feeling even of his regret. He prefers death to self-degradation. In a word, although this passion be pure in its origin, and generous in its exertion, guilt alone deranges, in a greater degree than the love of glory, the equilibrium of the soul: it hurries it with impetuous violence out of the natural order, to which by no efforts can it afterwards be restored.

While I have thus laboured, with a kind of austerity, to display every consideration which can deter from the love of glory, I have been obliged to employ a great effort of reflection. So many distinguished names presented themselves to my mind, that enthusiasm almost overpowered me; so many glorious shades seemed to complain that their renown was contemned, while the source of their happiness was thus unveiled: above all, in describing the different

stages of the brilliant career of glory, I feared most that I might sketch out the portrait of my father,* the man who, of all the characters of the present time, has reaped the greatest portion of glory, and to whom the impartial justice of ages will confirm the possession in its greatest extent. But it is not to that man who has displayed for the chief object of his affections a sensibility as extraordinary as his genius; it is not to him that the traits which my picture exhibits can apply. Were I even to avail myself of the knowledge of his character which my memory might supply, it would be to show what important changes the love of virtue can effect upon the nature and the misfortunes which belong to the passion for glory.

But, pursuing the plan which I have adopted, it is not my wish to divert the man of genius from diffusing his benefits over the human race. I should wish, however, to separate from the motives, by which he is animated, the desire of the rewards which cotemporary opinion bestows. I should wish to lop away that which is of the very essence of the passions,—subjection to the power of others.

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* The celebrated M. Neckar.

CHAP. II.

OF AMBITION.

In speaking of the love of glory, I have considered it only in its most perfect sublimity, in that character when it springs from real talents, and aspires only to the splendour of fame. By ambition, I understand that passion which has only power for its object, that is to say, the possession of places, of riches, or of honours, which may conduce to its attainment: a passion which mediocrity may likewise indulge, because ordinary talents may obtain the success with which it is attended.

The pains attached to this passion are of a different kind from those which belong to the love of glory. Its horizon being more contracted and its object being positive, all the sufferings which result from that expansion of soul beyond the proportion which befits the lot of humanity, are not experienced by the ambitious. A quick feeling for mankind, to them, forms no subject of disquietude. The suffrage of strangers does not enflame their desires. Power, that is to say, the right of con-

trouling the external expressions of men's thoughts, and the desire of receiving the incense of praise wherever its authority extends, constitute the objects which ambition obtains. It in many respects forms a contrast to the love of glory. In comparing them together, then, I shall naturally be led to furnish some new illustration of the chapter which I have just finished.

In ambition, every thing, which its career comprehends, is previously fixed and ascertained. Its pleasures and its pains are subjected to determinate events. The imagination has little sway over the ambitious, for nothing is more real than the advantages of power. The pains then which arise from an overheated fancy are unknown to the ambitious. But if the wanderings of imagination open a vast field for sorrow, they also present a wide sphere, in which we can elevate ourselves above every thing that surrounds us, pass the confines of life, and lose ourselves in futurity. In ambition, on the contrary, every thing is present, every thing is positive. Nothing is to be seen beyond the boundary to which it extends, nothing remains after it has sustained disappointment; and it is by this inflexibility of calculation and this oblivion of the past, that

its advantages and its losses ought to be estimated.

To obtain and to preserve power is the whole aim of the ambitious man. He never can abandon any of its dictates, for nature seldom proves a good guide in the career of politics. By a very cruel contrast, likewise, this passion, sufficiently violent to overcome every obstacle, renders necessary that continual reserve which self restraint imposes. It must act with equal force to stimulate and to check The love of glory may give scope to its feelings. The resentment, the enthusiasm of a hero, have sometimes assisted his genius; and when his feelings were honourable, they have conduced to his service. But ambition has only one object. He who values power at so high a price is insensible to every other kind of distinction. This disposition supposes a species of contempt for the human race, a contracted selfishness which shuts the soul to other enjoyments. The fire of this passion renders the soul cold and callous; it is morose and sullen, like all those feelings which are consigned to secrecy by the judgment which we ourselves form of their nature, and which are always experienced with much greater violence than their external expressions announce. The ambitious man, doubtless, when he has attained his object, no longer

is agitated by that restless desire which remains after the triumphs of glory. His object is proportioned to his wishes; and as, when it is lost, he feels no personal resources in the possession of its favours, in the actual possession he is conscious of no void. The object of ambition, too, is certainly more easy to be attained than that of glory; and as the fate of the ambitious man depends upon a smaller number of individuals than that of the character that cultivates renown, in this respect he is less unhappy. It is of much greater importance, however, to divert men from the pursuit of ambition than from the love of glory. The latter sentiment is almost as rare as genius, and it is almost never separated from those great talents by which it is excused. It seems, indeed, as if Providence, in its goodness, had intended that such a passion should never be combined with the impossibility of its gratification, least the soul might be corroded with the torture of unsatisfied desire. Ambition, on the contrary, is within the reach of the talents of the majority of men, and superiority would be more inclined than mediocrity to shun the prosecution of its objects. There is, besides, a kind of philosophical reflection which may have some influence even upon those who are captivated with the advantages of ambition; it is, that power is the most

inauspicious of all the relations by which we can be connected with a great number of men.

The perfect knowledge of men must lead us either to throw off their yoke, or to rule them by our authority. What they expect, what they hope from you, throws a veil over their defects, and prompts them to display all their good qualities. Those who are desirous to profit by your assistance, are so ingeniously amiable, their displays of attachment are so varied, their praises so readily assume the air of independence, their emotion is so lively, that, in declaring they are attached to you, they equally impose upon themselves and upon you. The influence of hope so richly embellishes every character, that it is necessary to possess a great share of penetration of mind and pride of soul, to distinguish and to repress the sentiments which your own power inspires. If you wish, then, to love men, form your opinion of them at the moment when they require your assistance; but this illusion of an instant is purchased by a whole life.

The pains which are connected with the pursuit of ambition begin with its first steps, and the term to which it leads affords more unmixed enjoyment than the path which you must

traverse. If a man of narrow understanding endeavours to attain an elevated station, can there be conceived a more painful situation than that which arises from the incessant hints which interest gives to self-love? In the ordinary scenes of life, we impose upon ourselves as to the degree of our own merit: but an active principle discovers to the ambitious man the extent of his talents, and his passion opens his eyes to his own defects, not as reason to deter from the attempt, but in the shape of desire, fearful of its success. Then he is employed chiefly in deceiving others, and in order to succeed in this object, he must never lose sight of himself. To forget, for a moment, the part which it is necessary to support, would be fatal: he must arrange with skill the knowledge he possesses, and digest his thoughts with art, that every thing which he says may be considered, only as hinting what his discretion conceals. He must employ able agents to second his views, without betraying his defects, and attach himself to superiors, full of ignorance and vanity, whose judgment may be blinded by praise. He ought to impose upon those who are dependent upon him by the reserve which he maintains; and deceive, by his pretension to talent, those from whom he hopes for assistance. In a word, he must constantly avoid every trial by

which his true value might be ascertained. Thus, harrassed like a criminal who dreads the discovery of his guilt, he knows that a penetrating mind can detect the starched ignorance, in the reserve of gravity; and discover, in the enthusiasm of flattery, the affected animation of a frigid heart. The efforts of an ambitious man are constantly employed to display and to preserve the laboured manner of superior talent. He at once experiences the uneasiness which arises from the trouble he must undergo, and from the consciousness of his own humiliation. In order to attain his object, therefore, his attention must constantly be turned to the recollection of his own contracted abilities.

If you suppose, on the contrary, that the ambitious man possesses a superior genius, an energetic soul, his passion demands success. He must repress, he must curb every feeling which could raise any obstacle to his desire. He must not even be deterred by the wounds of remorse which attend the performance of actions at which conscience revolts; but the constraint which present circumstances require, is a source of real pain. The dictates of our own sentiments cannot be outraged with impunity. He whose ambition prompts him to

support in the tribune an opinion which his pride disdains, which his humanity condemns, which the justice of his mind rejects, experiences a painful feeling, independent even of the reflection by which he may be censured or absolved. He sustains his own good opinion, perhaps, by the hope that he shall be able to discover his true sentiments when he has attained his object. But if he suffers shipwreck before he gains the haven, if he is banished, when, like Brutus, he counterfeits the madman, vainly would he attempt to explain what were his intentions and his hopes. Actions are always more prominent than commentaries, and what is said upon the theatre is never effaced by what is written in retirement. It is in the conflict of their interests, not in the silence of their passions, that we believe we penetrate into the real opinions of men. What then can be a greater calamity than to have acquired a reputation which our true character contradicts !

The man who views himself in the same light which public opinion has sanctioned, who preserves in his own breast all the dignified sentiments which accuse his conduct, who can hardly suppress his real character in the intoxication of success, must be placed in the most painful situation in the moment of calamity.

It is from an intimate acquaintance with the traces which ambition leaves in the heart after it experiences reverse, and the impossibility of fixing its prosperity, that we are enabled to judge of the extent of the horror which it must inspire.

We have only to open the book of history, to discover the difficulty of preserving the success which ambition attains. The majority of private interests is hostile to its permanence. Men join in demanding a new lottery, as they are dissatisfied with the tickets which they have drawn. The success of the ambitious man, too, is opposed by chance, which moves in a very regular course, when it is calculated within a certain space, and in a very extended application. Chance in this view contains nearly an equal probability of success and disappointment, and seems intended to diffuse happiness impartially among mankind. The ambitious man is opposed by the irresistible propensity of the public to judge and to create anew, to bear down a name too often repeated, to experience the agitation of new scenes and new events. In a word, the multitude, composed of obscure men, desire to see, from time to time, the value of private stations raised by the example of

signal falls, and lend an active force to the abstract arguments which extoll the peaceful advantages of ordinary life.

Eminent situations likewise are forfeited by the change which they produce upon those by whom they are occupied. Haughtiness or sloth, distrust or infatuation, arise from the continued possession of power. This situation, in which moderation is no less nescessary than the spirit which prompts the acquisition, demands a combination of qualities almost impossible ; and the soul which is harrassed with fatigue, or is agitated by disquietude, which yields to intoxication or to alarm, loses that energy necessary to maintain the situation in which it is placed. Here I speak only of the real success of ambition. Much of it is merely apparent, and it is with this that we ought to begin the history of its disappointments. Some men have preserved to the end of their life the power they had acquired; but, in order to retain it, they were compelled to exert all the efforts it required to secure the first success; it cost all the distress which the loss would have occasioned. One is compelled to pursue that system of dissimulation which led to the station which he occupies; and, more harrassed by terror than those whose homage he receives, the secrecy which he is

forced to wrap up in his own breast agitates his whole frame. Another incessantly prostrates himself, to maintain the favour of the master, whether king or people, from whom he derives his power.

In a monarchy, the ambitious man is obliged to adopt all the received truths, to view as important all established forms. If he inspires awe, he gives offence; if he continues the same behaviour, his power is supposed to be on the decline. In a democracy, he must anticipate the wishes of the people, he must obey their desires while he becomes responsible for the event: he must every day stake his whole fortune, without hoping to derive from the past any support for the future. In a word, no man ever existed who was the peaceable possessor of an eminent station. The loss of dignity in the greatest number has been distinguished by a signal fall. Some have purchased the possession by all the torments of uncertainty and apprehension. Nevertheless, such was the dread they entertained of a return to a private life, that Sylla is the only ambitious character who, having voluntarily abdicated his power, peaceably outlived this great resolution. The step which he took still excites the astonishment of ages; and moralists in every succeeding age

have proposed, as the subject of their investigations, the solution of this problem. Charles V. absorbed all his attention in the contemplation of death; when ceasing to reign, he thought he had ceased to live. Victor Amadeus again wished to mount a throne which a distracted imagination had induced him to abandon. In a word, no man ever descended without regret from a rank which placed him superior to other men; at least no ambitious man; for what is the destiny without the soul by which it is characterised? Events are the external appendages of life, its real source lies in our own feelings. Dioclesian may quit a throne; Charles II. may preserve it in peace: the one is a philosopher, the other an epicurean. Both of them enjoy a crown, the object of their ambitious wishes. But though seated upon a throne, they practised the manners of private life; and their good qualities, as well as their defects, rendered them absolute strangers to that ambition, of which their situation might be the object.

In a word, though there might be a chance of prolonging the possession of the benefits which ambition presents, is it an undertaking which offers such extraordinary advantages? The mind which devotes itself to the pleasures of ambition for ever, renders itself incapable

of any other mode of existence. He that embarks in the enterprizes of ambition must burn the vessels which might transport him back to a more tranquil state of life, and desperately place himself between victory and death. Ambition is that passion, which, in its misfortunes, feels most of any the necessity of vengeance; an invincible proof that it also leaves behind it the fewest means of consolation. Ambition corrupts the heart; for how is it possible, that after having rendered every thing subservient to our own views, and considered every thing only as it affected ourselves, we should transport ourselves into the place of another, and sympathize with his situation? After having ranked all around us only as instruments or as obstacles, how can we afterwards consider them as friends? Selfishness is the natural progress of the history of the soul, is the defect of age, because it is that failing which admits of no correction. To divert our cares and solicitudes for ourselves to another object, is a kind of moral regeneration, of which there are very few examples.

The love of glory has so much grandeur in its success, that even its disappointments are impressed with the same air of dignity. Melancholy may delight to contemplate them, and

the pity they inspire preserves that respectful character which serves to support the great man to whom it is extended. We reflect that the hope of obtaining immortality by public services, that the crown which fame bestows, were the only rewards by which he laboured to be distinguished. It should seem that by abandoning to neglect him whose object was the love of glory, men expose themselves to the danger of personal loss. Some of them are afraid least they err against their own interest, by renouncing their share of the benefits which it was his object to confer. None can despise either his efforts or his object. He still retains his personal valour and his appeal to posterity; and if he is overpowered by injustice, the injustice likewise serves to afford some consolation to the regret of disappointment. But the ambitious man, deprived of power, lives only in his own eyes and for himself. He has staked all upon a throw, and has lost: such is the history of his life. The public has won by his bad fortune, for the advantages he possessed are now placed within the reach and restored to the hopes of all, and the triumph of his rivals is the only lively sensation which his retreat inspires. In a very short time, this incident, too, is remembered no more; and the best chance of happiness which his retirement

affords, is the facility with which the object is allowed to sink into oblivion. By a cruel combination, however, the world, in whose estimation you wish to be viewed with importance, no longer remembers your past existence, and those who mingle in your society can never divest themselves of the recollection of what you have been.

The glory of a great man diffuses far around a brilliant lustre over those to whom he is related; but the places, the honours which the ambitious man distributes every moment, encroach upon the interests of all. The palms of genius follow their conqueror at a respectful distance. The gifts of fortune are displayed about your person; they press around you; and as they leave behind them no right to esteem, when they are taken away, all the ties with which you were bound to society are broken; or if shame still induces a few friends to remain, so many personal regrets recur to their minds, that they incessantly reproach the man who is stripped of all, on account of the share which they had in his enjoyments. Even he himself cannot banish the painful reflections by which he is haunted. The most cruel losses are those which at once overthrow the system and affect every incident of life. The pleasures

which glory affords, thinly scattered in the course of fate, epochs in the revolution of a number of years, accustom the mind to endure long intervals between the moments of happiness. The possession of places and of honours, on the other hand, being a habitual advantage, their loss must be felt every moment of life. The lover of glory has a conscience, and this is pride; though this sentiment renders a man much less independent than attachment to virtue, it secures us from servitude to others, if it does not confer upon us the empire of ourselves. The ambitious man has never valued dignity of character above the advantages of power; and as no price appears too extravagant to purchase the acquisition, when it is gone it leaves behind it no consolation. In order to love and to possess glory, qualities so supereminent are required, that if their highest theatre of action is without us, yet they still can supply materials for reflection in the silence of retreat. But the passion of ambition, the means necessary to success in the objects it pursues, are useless for any other purpose. It is impulse rather than force. It is a kind of ardour which cannot be supported on its own resources. It is a sentiment in its nature hostile to the past, to reflection, to every thing which leads to the contemplation of our former

and present situation. Opinion, while it blames the sacrifices of disappointed ambition, completes its misery by refusing sympathy. This refusal, too, is unjust; for pity ought to be guided by other motives than esteem; it ought to be regulated by the extent of the misery by which it is solicited. In a word, the calamities of ambition are of such a nature, that the strongest characters have never found in their own breasts a power sufficient to enable them to support their weight.

Cardinal Alberoni wished to domineer in the little republic of Lucca, which he had chosen as the place of his retreat. We see old men drag along with them to court the disquietudes with which they are agitated; setting ridicule and contempt at defiance, to gratify the pleasure they feel in dwelling upon the last shadow of the past.

The passion of glory cannot be deceived in its object. It wishes either to possess it entire, or to reject every thing that would diminish its own dignity. But ambition condescends to accept the first, the second, the third place, in the order of credit and power, and even humbles itself to each degree, from the horror which it feels at the idea of being absolutely deprived

of all that can crown, or satisfy, or even delude its desires.

Is it not possible, may it be said, to live as happily, after having occupied high stations, as before they were obtained? No: a feeble effort will never be effectual to carry you back to the point from which it first enabled you to move, and the re-action will throw you farther back, than when you first began to ascend. It is the great and the cruel character of the passions, to tinge the whole of life with the violence of their operations, and to communicate the happiness they may afford only to a few moments of our existence.

If these general considerations are sufficient to convey a just idea of the influence of ambition upon happiness, the authors, the spectators, the cotemporaries of the French revolution must find, in their own hearts, new motives to shun all political passions.

In the moments of revolution, it is ambition alone which can obtain success. Means of acquiring power remain; but opinion, which distributes glory, no longer exists. The people command, instead of judging. Performing an active part in the events which occur, they ar-

range themselves upon one side or other. The nation then consists only of combatants; the impartial power, called THE PUBLIC, is no where to be found. What is great and just, abstractly, is no longer acknowledged: every thing is estimated by its relation to the prevailing passions of the moment. Strangers have no means of ascertaining the esteem they ought to confer upon that conduct which all the spectators have condemned. Perhaps even no voice will communicate a faithful report to posterity. In the midst of revolution, either the impulse of ambition or the dictates of conscience must be obeyed; no other guides can lead with safety to its conclusion. Yet what ambition! what horrible sacrifices does it exact! what a woeful reward does it promise! A revolution suspends every power but that of force; the social order establishes the ascendancy of esteem and of virtue. Revolutions set all men at variance with their physical resources. The kind of moral influence which they admit, is the fanaticism of certain ideas, which, being susceptible of no modification, of no limits, are the weapons of warfare, not the conclusions of judgment. The man, then, who yields to ambition, at the period of revolutions, must ever outstrip the impulse which men's minds have received; it is a rapid descent in which it is impossible to stop.

If you leap down from the chariot, you are mangled by the fall. To shun the danger, is more fatal than to brave it openly. You must guide your course along the path which is encompassed with destruction, and the least retrogade movement proves the ruin of him who attempts it, without preventing the consequence at which he recoiled. Nothing can be more frantic than to interfere in circumstances which are altogether independent of the passions of an individual. It is to risk much greater evils than the loss of life; it is to resign the whole moral rectitude of our conduct to the guidance of a material power. Men imagine that their influence is felt in revolutions; they imagine that they act, that they are the causes which produce certain effects; and yet they are but like a stone projected forwards by the turning of the great wheel. Another might have occupied the same place, and different means would have produced the same effect. The name of Chief denotes only the person who is precipitated onwards by the crowd, which follows behind, and pushes forward.

The reverses and the successes of all those whom we see performing a distinguished part in a revolution, are nothing more than the fortunate or unfortunate coincidence of such men

with the particular state of things. There is no factious man who can truly predict what measures he will pursue to-morrow; for it is power which a faction endeavours to obtain, rather than the object at which it originally aimed A triumph may be obtained by adopting measures directly opposite to those which were projected, if the same party continues to govern, and the fanatics alone retain the factious in the same course. The latter are desirous only of power; and ambition never hesitates greatly at the sacrifice of character. In such times, in order to govern men to a certain extent, they must not possess any certain rules by which to calculate before-hand the conduct you will observe. When they know that you are inviolably attached to particular principles of morality, they prepare to attack you in the path which you must pursue.

In order to obtain, in order to preserve a few moments of power in the course of a revolution, it is necessary to disobey the dictates both of the heart and of the understanding. Whatever party you espouse, the faction in its essence is demogogical; it is composed of men who are unwilling to obey, who feel themselves necessary, and who do not consider themselves bound to those by whom they are commanded. It is

composed of men disposed to choose new chiefs every day, because they are actuated only by feelings of their own interest, and by no anterior motives of subordination, natural or political It is of more consequence to leaders that they should not be suspected by their soldiers, than that they should be dreaded by their enemies. Crimes of every description, crimes wholly useless to the success of the cause, are dictated by the ferocious enthusiasm of the populace. They dread pity, whatever be the degree of its force; it is in fury, not in clemency, that they are sensible of their power. A people who govern, never cease to be under the influence of fear: they imagine themselves every moment on the point of losing their authority; and prone, from their situation, to the emotions of envy, they never feel for the vanquished that interest which oppressed weakness is calculated to inspire: they view the fallen still as objects of alarm. The man, then, who wishes to obtain a great influence in these times of crisis, must keep alive the courage of the multitude by his inflexible cruelty. He feels not the panic terrors which spring from ignorance, but he must minister to the hideous sacrifices which it requires. He must immolate victims, whom no interest leads him to fear, whom his character often prompts him to

save. He must commit crimes, without the excuse of seduction, of madness, even of atrocity, by the command of a sovereign, whose orders he cannot foresee, and none of whose passions his enlightened soul can adopt. Alas! and what a reward for such efforts!

What kind of suffrage does he thus procure! How tyrannical is the gratitude which bestows the crown of reward! He sees so well the limits of his power, he feels so often that he obeys under the appearance of command; the passions of men are so violently deranged in the moment of revolution, that no illusion is possible, and the most magically delightful of all emotions, that which the acclamations of a whole people inspire, can no more be renewed with pleasure to him who has seen that people in the movements of a revolution. Like Cromwell, he says, when viewing the crowd whose suffrages he enjoys: "They would applaud in the same manner, were they following me to the gallows."

This event is never removed at a great distance from the ambitious man. To-morrow may be the day when it shall happen. Your judges, your assassins, are in the crowd that surrounds you, and the transport that raises you

to distinction becomes the very impulse which precipitates your overthrow. By what dangers are you menaced, what rapidity in the fall, how profound the abyss! Although success may not have raised you higher, reverse sweeps you lower than you stood before, and plunges you still deeper in the obscurity of your fall.

Diversity of opinions prevents any claim to glory from being confirmed; but those who differ in their opinions in your favour, agree in the expression of contempt. A character is decided with a shout; and the people, when they abandon the ambitious man, for the first time, recognize the crimes which they have forced him to commit, and reproach him with the guilt in order to absolve themselves from the charge. But woe be to the man who, fond of power, has plunged himself into the scenes of a revolution! Cromwell remained a successful usurper, because the principle of the troubles he fomented was religion, which prompts to insurrection without discharging from obedience; because it was a feeling of superstition which induced a change of masters, but did not lead men to spurn every yoke. When the cause of revolutions, however, is the extravagant excess of all ideas of liberty, it is impossible that the first leaders of the insur-

rection should preserve their power. They are doomed to excite the movement by which they are to be the first overwhelmed. They are fated to develope the principles by which they are to be condemned. In a word, they may gratify their opinion, but never their interest; and, in a revolution, fanaticism is even more sober than ambition.

CHAP. III.

OF VANITY.

IT is common to ask whether vanity be a passion? To consider the insufficiency of its object, we should be tempted to doubt that it is; but when we observe the violence of the movements which it inspires, we recognize the characteristics of the passions, and discover in the servile dependence on every thing around them, into which, by this abject feeling, men are degraded, all the sufferings which it is calculated to produce. The love of glory is founded upon the most elevated principles in the nature of man. Ambition is connected with every thing that is most substantial and positive in the mutual relations of human beings. Vanity, on the contrary, is dependent upon that which has no real value, either in itself or in others; it pursues apparent advantages and fleeting effects; it lives upon the offal of the two other passions; sometimes, however, it associates itself to their empire. Man is hurried into extremes by his weakness or by his strength, but most commonly vanity gains the ascendant over every other passion in the breast of him who expe-

riences its influence. The pains which attend this passion are but little known, because those who feel its smart keep it secret; and all mankind having agreed to despise this sentiment, the regrets or the fears of which it is the object are never avowed.

One of the first vexations incident to vanity, is to find in itself at once the cause of its sufferings, and the necessity of concealing them. Vanity feeds upon a success not sufficiently exalted to admit of dignity in its disappointments.

Glory, ambition, challenge their proper appellations. Vanity sometimes prevails, while the person whom it governs remains unconscious of its existence. Never, at least, is its power publicly recognized by him who submits to its sway. He wishes to be thought superior to the gratifications which he obtains, as well as to those which are denied. The public, however, disdaining his object, and remarking his exertions, depreciate the possession by embittering its loss. The importance of the object to which we aspire does not determine the degree of grief which the privation of it occasions. Our feeling is in proportion to the violence of the desire; above all, to the opinion

which others have formed of the intenseness of our wishes.

The pains which vanity is destined to feel are likewise distinguished by this circumstance,—that we learn from others, rather than from our own feelings, the degree of vexation which it is fitted to occasion. The more the world believes you to be distressed, your sources of affliction are multiplied. There is no passion which so much keeps self in view, but there is none which proceeds less from causes within our own breast. All its movements receive their impulse from external objects. It is not only to the association of men in communities to which this feeling owes its rise, but to a degree of civilization which is not known in every country, and the effects of which would be almost beyond the conception of a people whose manners and institutions are simple. Nature rejects the emotions of vanity, and men in a rude state would be unable to comprehend how distresses so profound could spring from emotions so unnecessary.

Have you ever been in company with Damon? He is a person of obscure birth. He is conscious of this, and he is aware that every body knows it. But, instead of displaying a

contempt of this advantage, on grounds of reason and of interest, he has but one object in the world, and it is to entertain you with the subject of the great lords with whom he has passed his life He protects them, that he may not seem to be protected; he calls them by their names, while their equals address them by their titles; and discovers himself to be a subaltern, from his anxiety to avoid the appearance of inferiority. His conversation consists of parentheses, which, however, are the principal points of what he says. He would affect to drop by accident what he has the most violent inclination to tell. He labours to appear disgusted with every thing which he envies. In order to wear the appearance of ease, he sinks into excessive familiarity. He becomes confirmed in the habit, because nobody has sufficient regard for him to check his forwardness. All the attention which he receives in company arises from the insignificance in which he is viewed, and the anxiety which people feel to treat his folly with some reserve, for fear of losing the pleasure of laughing at him. To whom does he appear in the light in which he wishes to be considered? To nobody; perhaps he even suspects this to be the case; but his active vanity comes in to his relief. In wishing to show the vain man his own absur-

dity, he may be touched with a momentary agitation; but his foible is not to be corrected. Hope revives every moment, even from the mortification he has experienced, or rather, as happens frequently in many other of the passions, the principle recovers its activity even without any precise feeling of hope. We are unwilling to determine upon the sacrifice of any feeling which we cherish.

Are you acquainted with Lycedas? He has grown old in politics, without acquiring any knowledge of their nature, without collecting the smallest experience; yet he imagines that he possesses the talent fitted for the offices which he has occupied. He imparts to you in confidence what you find in all the newspapers. He speaks with caution even of the ministers of the last century: he accompanies every phrase with a grimace, which has no more meaning than his words. He carries in his pocket letters from ministers and men of influence, which relate to common affairs, but which seem to him proofs of confidence. He shudders at what he calls 'a strange head;' and this name he very readily bestows upon every superior man. He has a philippic against wit, which the majority of a drawing room almost always applaud. "Your wit," says he, "is an insuperable barrier

to success in life. Your men of wit have no idea of business.' Lycedas, you have no wit, it is true; but it does not follow from this that you are capable of governing an empire.

People often found their vanity upon qualities which they do not possess. We frequently see men value themselves upon intellectual or external advantages of which they are destitute. The vain man swells with satisfaction at the view of every thing which has a relation to himself indiscriminately. ''Twas I! 'twas I!' again he exclaims. This enthusiastic egotism converts all his defects into charms. In this respect Cleon makes a very conspicuous figure. Every kind of pretension is at once combined in his mind. He is ugly; he imagines himself handsome: his writings sink into obscurity; he ascribes it to a cabal, whose opposition does him honour: he is neglected; and he conceives that he is persecuted: he does not wait for you to praise him; he tells you what you should think: he speaks to you of himself, before you have asked him a single question; and if you answer him, he pays no attention to what you say. he likes much better to hear himself; for you can never say any thing to equal what he will say of himself. A person of infinite wit, speaking of what might precisely be called a

proud and vain man, once said, "*When I see him, I feel something like the pleasure of seeing a happy couple, his self-love and he live so happily together.*" Indeed when self-love has reached a certain excess, it is so perfectly satisfied with itself, that it has no occasion to be uneasy, to doubt the opinion of others. It forms a resource within itself, and this credulity in its own merit, indeed, has some of the advantages of those modes of worship, which are founded upon a firm faith.

But as vanity is a passion, he who is subject to it cannot be tranquil. Detached from all pleasures that are not personal, from all sensible affections, this selfishness destroys the possibility of loving. There can be no object so unproductive as one's self. Man extends his faculties by employing them upon something external; in the cultivation of some opinion, some attachment, some species of virtue. Vanity and pride render the mind, in some sort, stationary, nor permit it to verge from the narrow circle in which it is confined; and yet within that circle lies a source of misery more abundant than is to be found in any other existence, the interests of which may be more multiplied. By concentrating our life, we

concentrate likewise our sufferings; and he who exists only for himself, diminishes his means of enjoyment, by rendering himself more accessible to the impression of pain. We see, however, in the external appearance of some men, such symptoms of content and of security, that we should be tempted to envy their vanity as the only real enjoyment, since it is the most perfect of all illusions. But a single reflection overthrows all the authority of these apparent symptoms; and it is, that these men, having no other source of happiness but the effect which they produce upon others, in order to conceal from every eye the secret torments which disappointment or mortification occasions, are capable of a kind of effort which no other motive could be able to effect. In most situations, too, happiness forms part of the pageantry of vain men; or, if they acknowledge any uneasiness, it can only be that which it is honourable to feel.

The vanity of superior men leads them to aspire at distinctions to which they have no right. This foible of great genius continually recurs in history. We have seen distinguished authors value themselves chiefly upon the trifling success which they have obtained in public affairs; warriors, courageous and firm; minis-

ters, flattered beyond every thing with the praise bestowed upon their indifferent writings; men who have possessed great qualities, eager in the pursuit of petty advantages. In a word, as the imagination inflames all the passions, vanity is much more active in the pursuit of success which is doubtful, and more anxious to be thought to possess talents on which it cannot depend. Emulation excites our real qualities. Vanity takes the lead in every thing in which we are deficient. Vanity often does not extinguish pride; and as nothing is so slavish as vanity, nor so independent, on the contrary, as true pride, there is no punishment more cruel than the combination of these two qualities in the same character. We are eager to attain what we despise: we cannot submit to the degradation, nor can we conquer the desire. We blush, even in our own eyes; even to our own view, we exhibit the spectacle which vanity presents to an enlightened and elevated soul.

This passion, which is great only in the pain which it occasions, and cannot, but on this very account, be classed with the others, developes all its qualities in the conduct of women. Every thing in them is love or vanity. When they desire to maintain more extended or more glittering intercourse than that which the soft and

tender sentiments with which they inspire those around them are calculated to produce, they endeavour to attain the gratification which vanity affords. The efforts which may prove advantageous to men of power and of glory, seldom bestow upon women more than a passing applause,—the credit of intrigue; in a word, a kind of triumph which springs from vanity, that sentiment which corresponds to their talents and to their destiny. It is in women, therefore, that we must examine its character.

There are women who are vain of advantages which are not personal to themselves, such as birth, rank, and fortune. Nothing can evince a more complete want of feeling of the dignity of the sex. The origin of all women is celestial; for it is to the gifts of nature that they owe their influence. When they interfere with the objects of pride and ambition, they strip their charms of all the magic which they possess. The credit which they obtain, appearing only a fleeting and limited existence, can never procure them the consideration which results from extensive power, and the success which they obtain has the distinctive character of the triumphs of vanity; it supposes neither merit nor respect for the person on whom it is bestowed. Women thus exasperate against

them the passions of those who otherwise would have no wish but to love them. The only real absurdity in character, that which results from opposition to the nature of things, renders their efforts ridiculous. When they oppose the projects, the ambition of men, they inspire that lively resentment which an unexpected obstacle excites. If they mingle in political intrigues in their youth, their modesty will be brought into suspicion. If they are old, the disgust which they inspire as women, injures their pretensions to the business of men. The figure of a woman, whatever be the force, the extent of her mind, whatever be the importance of the objects to which she employs her attention, form either an obstacle, or an advantage in the history of her life. Such is the law which men have established. The more they are inclined, however, to judge a woman by the advantages or the defects of her sex, the more they are offended to see her embrace a destination contrary to her nature.

These reflections, it will easily be conceived, are not intended to divert women from all serious occupation; but to save them from the calamity of pursuing such objects, as the great aim of their exertions. When the part which they

perform in important affairs, arises from attachment to him by whom they are conducted; when feeling alone dictates their opinions, inspires their views, they do not swerve from the path which nature has marked out. They love; they are women. But when they labour to perform an active and prominent part; when they wish to direct all events to their own views, and consider them as they affect their own influence, their personal interest; then they are hardly worthy of the ephemeral applauses in which the triumphs of vanity consist. Women are almost never honoured by any kind of claim to superiority. Even the distinction of art, which seems to present a more extensive career, frequently is unable to carry them beyond the height of vanity. The reason of this unjust and improper judgment is, that men see no kind of general utility in encouraging the success of women in this career; and because every panegyric that is not founded upon the basis of utility, is neither profound, nor permanent, nor universal. Chance may sometimes furnish exceptions. If there be any minds carried away, either by their character or their talents, they will perhaps emancipate themselves from the trammels of the common rule, and one day may be crowned with a few palms

of glory. They will not, however, escape the inevitable misery which will ever attach to their fate.

The happiness of women is dead to every kind of personal ambition; when they wish to please only to be loved, when that delightful hope is the only motive of their conduct, they are more anxious to cultivate accomplishment than to present themselves to observation; more solicitous to form their mind, to promote the happiness of one than to catch the admiration of all. But when they aspire at celebrity, their efforts, as well as their success, banish that feeling in which, under different names, must always consist the fortune of their life. A woman cannot exist in an insulated state. Glory, even, would not furnish her with a sufficient support; and the insurmountable weakness of her nature, and of her situation in the social order, has placed her in a constant state of dependence, from which even an immortal genius could not save her. Besides, nothing can efface in woman the particular features by which her character is distinguished. She who should devote her attention to the demonstration of the propositions in Euclid, would likewise wish to enjoy the happiness of loving and being beloved; and when women pursue a course which deprives

them of that object, their lively regret, or their ridiculous pretensions, show that nothing can compensate to them for the destiny for which their souls were formed. Perhaps, indeed, the distinguished success she obtains may be a source of pleasure to him who courts the favour of a celebrated woman, by flattering his self-love. Yet the enthusiasm which this success inspires is, perhaps, less permanent in its nature than the attachment which is founded upon more frivolous qualities. The criticisms which necessarily succeed praise, dissipate that species of illusion through which all women should be seen. The imagination may create, may embellish, by the glowing colours which it bestows, even an unknown object; the person, however, on whom the whole world has pronounced an opinion, no longer receives any embellishment from the imagination. The real value of the object remains, but love is more captivated by the qualities it confers than by those it finds. Man views with complacency the superiority of his nature; and, like Pygmalion, prostrates himself only before his own work. In a word, if the splendour of a woman's celebrity attracts the homage of admirers, it is from a feeling in which love, perhaps, has no share. It assumes the form of this passion, but it is in order to secure access to the new

kind of power which it wishes to please. We approach a woman of distinguished renown as we do a man in place. The language we employ, indeed, is different, but the motive is the same. Sometimes intoxicated by the contending demonstrations of homage which the woman they cultivate receives, the admirers mutually animate the ardour of each other; but in their feelings they are dependent upon the conduct of their rivals. The first who abandon the pursuit may detach those who remain; and she who seems to be the object of all their adoration, at length discovers that she retains every individual by the example of his rivals.

What emotions of jealousy and of hatred do the distinguished success of a woman produce! What vexations are occasioned by the numberless means which envy takes to persecute! The majority of women are against her, from rivalship, from folly, or from principle. The talents of a woman, be what they may, always inspire them with uneasy sensations. Those who are for ever precluded from the distinctions of understanding, find a thousand ways of attacking them when they fall to the share of a woman. A beauty, in despising these destinctions, flatters herself that she dis-

plays with more advantage the merit she possesses. A woman who imagines herself remarkable for prudence and the correctness of her mind, and who, never having had two ideas in her head, wishes to be thought to have rejected what she really never comprehended, rises a little above her usual sterility, to hunt for a thousand absurdities in her whose wit animates and diversifies conversation. Mothers of families, too, thinking, with some reason, that the success even of true wit is not suited to the character which belongs to the fair sex, are pleased to see those attacked who have obtained the distinction.

It is to be considered likewise, that a woman who, after having obtained a real superiority, should consider herself raised above hatred, and, in her own estimation, should conceive herself elevated to the same eminence with the most distinguished men, would never attain that tranquillity and strength of mind which distinguish the character of such men. Imagination would ever be the most vigorous of her faculties. Her talents might enlarge, but her mind would be too violently agitated; her feelings would be troubled by chimeras, her actions would be directed by her illusions. Her understanding might deserve some degree of

glory, by transferring into her writings correctness of reasoning. Great talents, however, combined with a passionate imagination, lead to true general conclusions, but deceive with regard to particular applications. Women of a sensible and pliant temper will ever afford examples of this extraordinary union of error and of truth, of that kind of inspiration of mind which utters oracles to the universe, and yet is unable to supply common advice for the regulation of personal conduct. If we examine with attention the few women who possess real titles to glory, we shall find that this effort of their nature was always at the expence of their happiness. After having sung the sweetest lessons of morality and of philosophy, Sappho precipitated herself from the summit of the Leucadian rock. Elizabeth, after having subdued the enemies of England, fell a victim to her passion for the Earl of Essex. In a word, before entering this career of glory, whether the throne of the Cæsars or the crown of literary genius, be the object of desire, women ought to reflect, that for glory they must renounce happiness, and the repose which befits the destination of their sex; and that in this career there are few prizes to be obtained which can vie with the most obscure state of a beloved wife or a happy mother.

Quitting for a moment the examination of vanity, I have considered the consequences which result from the splendour of a high reputation. What shall we say, however, of those petty pretensions to a miserable success in literature, for which we see so many women neglect their feelings and their duties? Ingrossed by the interest which this inspires, they renounce the distinguishing characteristic of their sex more than the female champions in the days of chivalry; for it is far better to share in battle the dangers which we love, than to mingle in the contests of selfishness, to exact expressions of sentiment, to require homage for vanity, and thus to drain the eternal source, in order to satisfy emotions the most fleeting in their nature, and desires the most narrow in their object. That agitation which inspires the fair sex with a more natural pretension, since it is more nearly connected with the hope of being beloved, that agitation which inspires women with the desire of pleasing by the charms of their figure, presents also the most striking picture of the torments of vanity.

Observe a lady at a ball, anxious to be thought the finest woman in the assembly, and doubtful of her success. The pleasure which it is the purpose of the assembly to enjoy is lost to her.

She does not for a moment experience such a sensation; for it is totally absorbed by her prevailing sentiment, and the pains which she takes to conceal it. She watches the looks, the most trivial marks of the opinion of the company with the attention of a moralist and the anxiety of a politician; and wishing to conceal from every eye the torments she feels, her affectation of gaiety at the triumph of a rival, the turbulence of her conversation when that rival is applauded, the over-acted regard which she expresses for her, and the unnecessary efforts she makes, betray her sufferings and her constraint. Grace, that supreme charm of beauty, never displays itself but when the mind is at ease, and when confidence prevails. Uneasiness and constraint obscure those advantages which we possess; the countenance is contracted by every pang which self-love occasions. We very soon discover the change and the vexation which the discovery produces still increases the evil which it is desirous to repair. Vexation increases upon vexation, and the object is rendered more remote by the very desire of possession. In this picture, too, which, we should think, ought only to remind us of the caprices of a child, we recognize the sufferings of maturer age, the emotions which lead to despair and to a detes-

tation of life. To such a degree does the importance of the object increase with the attention we bestow upon it, and so much more does the sensation we experience arise from the character it receives than from the object by which it is inspired.

Who could think it! yet in the greatest event which ever agitated the human species, in the revolution of France, we may observe the developement of this principle, no less striking and complete than in the ball room, where the most frivolous claims to distinction display the effects of vanity in their warmest colours. This feeling, so limited in its object, so weak in its spring, that we hesitate to assign it a place among the passions, this very feeling has been one of the causes of the greatest shocks which ever convulsed the universe. I shall not call vanity the motive which prompted twenty-four millions of men to withdraw the privileges of two hundred thousand; it was reason which rose against the system; it was Nature that resumed her level. I shall not even assert that the resistance of the nobility to the revolution was occasioned by vanity. The reign of terror exposed that class to persecution and to sufferings which forbid us to recall the past.

It is in the interior movements of the revolution, however, where we may observe the empire of vanity, the desire of ephemeral applause; that rage to make a figure, that passion innate in every Frenchman; of which, compared with us, strangers have only a very imperfect idea. A great number of opinions have been dictated, only by the desire of surpassing the preceding speaker, and obtaining higher applause than he has received. The admission of spectators into the hall of deliberation alone proved sufficient to change the direction of the affairs of France. At first, the orators sacrificed, to catch applause, only high flown expressions; quickly, principles were yielded, decrees were proposed, and crimes were approved. By another fatal re-action, too, what was at first done only to please the multitude, misled the understanding itself, and the false judgment it dictated required new sacrifices. It was not to gratify sentiments of hatred and of fury that barbarous decrees were intended; it was only to catch a clap from the galleries. This noise intoxicated the speakers, and threw them into that state into which savages are plunged by strong liquors; and the spectators themselves, who applauded, wished, by these signs of approbation, to make proselytes of their neighbours, and enjoyed the pleasure of influencing the

conduct of their representatives. Doubtless the ascendant of fear at length succeeded to the emulation of vanity; but vanity had created this power, which extinguished for some time all the spontaneous movements of men. Soon after the reign of terror, we saw vanity spring up anew. The most obscure individuals boasted of having been inscribed in the list of proscription. Most of the Frenchmen you meet either pretend to have performed the most important character, or affirm that nothing which has taken place in France would have happened, if the advice had been accepted which they offered in such a place, at such an hour, on such an occasion! In a word, in France we are surrounded by men who all proclaim themselves the centre of this vast vortex. We are surrounded by men who would all have preserved France from the evils she has suffered, had they been appointed to the first offices in the government; but who all, from the same sentiment, refuse to acknowledge the ascendant of genius or of virtue.

It is an important question for the consideration of philosophers and publicists, whether vanity contributes to maintain or to defend liberty in a great nation. It certainly at first occasions a variety of obstacles to the establish-

ment of a new government. It is enough that a constitution is framed by certain men, to induce others to reject it. It is necessary, as in the case of the constituent assembly, to dismiss the founders, in order that the institutions may be adopted; and yet the institutions perish, if they are not defended by their authors. Envy, which loves to honour itself with the name of distrust, overthrows emulation, banishes knowledge, cannot support the union of power and of virtue, endeavours to divide in order to oppose them to each other, and erects the power of guilt, as the only one which degrades him who possesses it. But when a long course of calamity has silenced the passions, when the want of laws is so strongly felt that men are no longer considered but according to the legal power which is entrusted to them; it is possible that then, when it is the general spirit of a nation, vanity may contribute to preserve free institutions. As it is hostile to the ascendant of one man, it supports the constitutional laws, which, at the expiration of a fixed period of very short duration, return the most powerful men to a private condition. It in general supports the will of the laws, because it is an abstract authority in which every one has a part, and from which no one can derive glory.

Vanity is the foe of ambition. It wishes to overthrow what it cannot obtain. Vanity inspires a kind of importance, disseminated through every class, shared by every individual, which checks the power of glory; as bundles of straw repel the waves of the sea from the coasts of Holland. In a word, the vanity of all raises so many obstacles, so many difficulties, in the public career of every individual, that after a certain period, the great inconvenience of republics will perhaps no longer exist in France. The hatred, envy, suspicion, all that springs from vanity, will for ever disgust the ambition of place and of politics. Men will no longer unite together, but from love to their country, attachment to the cause of humanity; and these generous philosophic sentiments render men as inflexible as the laws which they are appointed to execute. This hope, perhaps, is a chimera: but I am persuaded it is true that vanity submits to law, as the means of avoiding the personal reputation of particular names; and when its constitution is established, preserves a great nation free, and its constitution from the danger of being overthrown by the usurpation of a single man.

NOTE,

TO BE READ BEFORE THE CHAPTER ON LOVE.

OF all the chapters of this work, there is none upon which I expect so much criticism as on the present. The other passions having a determinate object, affect, nearly in the same manner, all who experience their influence. The word LOVE awakens in the minds of those who hear it almost as many different ideas as the impressions of which they are susceptible. A great number of men have remained unacquainted with the love of glory, with ambition, with the spirit of party, &c. Every body imagines he has been in love, and almost every body is mistaken in this opinion. The other passions are much more natural, and consequently more frequent than this, for it is that with which the smallest quantity of selfishness is connected.

This chapter, I shall be told, is of too gloomy a cast; the idea of death which it inspires, is

inseparable from the picture of love which it exhibits; and yet love embellishes life, love is the charm of nature. No: there is no love in gay productions; there is no love in the pastoral nymphs. In this opinion women, especially, ought to coincide. It certainly is flattering to please, and thus to exercise on all around a power that exacts obedience for ourselves alone; a power which obtains only voluntary homage; a power which procures obedience, because others delight to obey; and managing others, even in opposition to their interest, obtains nothing but implicit submission and unqualified deference. But what connection is there between the pertness of coquetry and the sentiment of love? It is very possible, too, that men may be very much interested, very much amused, particularly by the attachment which beauty inspires, by the hope or the certainty of captivating it; but what connection has this kind of impression with the sentiment of love? It was my design in this work to treat only of the passions; the ordinary affections from which no profound distress can arise, did not enter into my subject; and love, when it is a passion, always leads to melancholy. There is something obscure in its impressions, which does not accord with gaiety. There is a settled conviction in our

minds that every thing which succeeds to love is worth nothing; that nothing can supply what we have experienced; and this conviction leads to the thoughts of death, even in the happiest moments of love. I have considered in love nothing but the sentiment, because it alone converts the inclination into a passion. It is not the first volume of the new Heloise, it is the departure of St. Preux, the letter from La Meillerie, the death of Julia, which characterise the passion in that romance. It is so rare to meet with the real heart-felt love, that I will venture to say that the ancients had no complete idea of this affection. Phædra labours under the yoke of fatality; Anacreon is inspired by feeling; Tibullus mingles somewhat of the spirit of madrigal in his voluptuous scenes; some verses of Dido, Ceyx, and Alcyone, in Ovid, in spite of the mythology which distracts the interest, by destroying the probability, are almost the only passages in which the sentiment possesses its full force, because it is distinct from every other influence. The Italians blend so much poetry with their love, that almost all the sentiments appear to you like pictures; your eyes retain the impression longer than your heart. Racine, that painter of love, in his tragedies, so sublime in so many other respects, mingles frequently with the

movements of passion elaborate expressions, which correspond only to the age in which he lived. This defect is not to be found in the tradegy of Phædra; but the beauties borrowed from the ancients, the beauties of poetic fancy, while they excite the most lively enthusiasm, do not produce that profound sympathy which arises from a most complete resemblance to sentiments we ourselves may experience. We admire the conception of the part of Phædra, we can transport ourselves into the situation of Amenaide. The tragedy of Tancred, then, is calculated to draw forth more tears. Voltaire, in his tragedies, Rousseau, in the new Heloise, Werter, some scenes of German tragedies, some English poets, passages of Ossian, &c. have transfused the most profound sensibility into love. Maternal tenderness, filial piety, friendship combined with sensibility, Pylades and Orestes, Niobe, Roman piety, all the other affections of the heart, are pourtrayed in the true sentiments by which they are characterised. Love alone is represented to us sometimes under the most rugged characters, sometimes so inseparable either from voluptuousness or from phrenzy, that it appears a picture rather than a sentiment, a disease rather than a passion of the soul. It is of this passion alone that I proposed to speak. I have rejected every

other mode in which love can be considered. The matter which composes the preceding chapters is collected from what I have remarked in history or in the world. In writing the present chapter, I have followed only my own impressions. I have composed rather from my own imagination than from observation; and kindred minds will recognize its justice.

CHAP. IV.

OF LOVE.

IF the OMNIPOTENT, who has placed man upon this earth, ever intended that he should conceive the idea of a celestial existence, he has bestowed upon him, for a few moments of his youth, the power of loving with passion, of living in another, of rendering his existence complete, by uniting it to the object he holds dear. For some time, at least, the limits of human destiny, the analysis of thought, the investigations of philosophy, are lost in the indescribable emotion of a delicious sentiment. The declining path was seductive, and the object which even appears below any efforts, seemed to surpass them all. We never cease to estimate whatever has a relation to ourselves; but the qualities, the charms, the enjoyments, the interests of those we love, have no limits but in our imagination. Alas! how delightful that moment, when we expose our life for the only friend on whom the choice of our soul has fallen! that moment when some act of absolute devotion gives him, at least, an idea of the feeling which oppressed the heart, because it was too

big for expression! A woman in those shocking times which we have lived to witness; a woman condemned to death with him she loved, leaving far behind her the assistance of mere *fortitude*, advanced to punishment with joy, exulted in the thought of having escaped the tortures of surviving, was proud to share the fate of her lover; and, perhaps, anticipating the period when the love she cherished for him might subside, she experienced a mixed sentiment of ferocity and tenderness, which led her to embrace death as an eternal union. Glory, ambition, fanaticism, and enthusiasm have their intervals; in this sentiment alone every instant is intoxication, nothing interrupts the influence of love; no fatigue is felt in this inexhaustible source of ideas and of happy emotions. As long as we continue to see, to feel only in another, all nature to us is under different forms, the spring, the prospect, and the climate, which we have enjoyed with the beloved object. The pleasures of the world consist in what he has said, what he has approved, and the amusements he has shared. Our success is estimated only by the praises he has heard, and the impression which the suffrage of all may produce upon him whom alone we are anxious to please. In a word, one single idea is capable of occasioning to man the most perfect felicity

or the madness of despair. Nothing fatigues life like those different interests, the combination of which has been reckoned a good system of happiness.

It does not follow from the principle, that we should avoid all passions, that we weaken the force of the misery they inflict, by combining several different ones together. It is even less fatal to resign ourselves entirely to the influence of a single passion. In this case, no doubt, we expose ourselves to death, from the intenseness of our own affections. The first object we ought to propose, however, when we consider the fate of men, is not the preservation of their lives. The distinction of their immortal nature is perceived only when it unites physical existence with the possession of moral happiness.

It is by the assistance of reflection, it is by divesting myself of all the enthusiasm of my youth, that I intend to consider love, or, to speak more correctly, that absolute devotion of our being to the sentiments, the happiness, the destiny of another, as the highest idea of felicity which can exalt the hope of man. This dependence upon a single object so completely separates us from the rest of the world, that the mind, which desires to escape from all the

constraints of self-love, from all the suspicions of calumny, from all that can degrade in the intercourse we maintain with mankind, discovers in this passion something solitary and concentred, which inspires the soul with the dignity of philosophy, and the unconstrained glow of feeling. We are withdrawn from the world by an interest much more lively than any thing it contains can excite. We enjoy pensive meditation and the sweet emotions of the heart; and in the deepest solitude of life the soul is more active than upon the throne of the Cæsars. In a word, at whatever period of life you call to mind the sentiment which you have cherished from your youth, every moment in which you have lived for another is infinitely more delightful than those you have passed amid selfish objects, and the very thought is sufficient to relieve you at once from remorse and from anxiety. When we pursue no other object but our own advantange, how can we prevail upon ourselves to form any decision? The desire, as it were, eludes the examination to which we subject the object. The event frequently turns out so contrary to our expectation, that we repent of the pains to which we have submitted, that we flag in the prosecution of our own interest, as well as of every other undertaking. But when life is devoted

to the first object of our affection, every thing is positive, every thing is determinate, every thing is captivating ; *he wishes it, it is necessary for him, it will form an addition to his happiness, the efforts we exert may serve to afford him delight a few moments of the day.* These motives are sufficient to guide the whole train of our conduct; then there is no uncertainty, no discouragement; this single enjoyment of the soul fills its utmost compass, grows as it extends, and proportioning itself to our faculties, secures to us the exercise and the enjoyment of them all. What superior mind can fail to see in a real feeling of this nature the germ of a greater number of thoughts than in any work which he can either compose or read? The greatest triumph of genius is to describe passion: what then must be passion itself? The gratifications of self-love, the utmost extent of personal enjoyment, even glory, what are they to the pleasure of being beloved? Ask any one whether he would prefer to be Amenaide or Voltaire? Ah! all these writers, these great men, these conquerors, struggle to obtain a single feeling of those exquisite emotions which love diffuses in streams through life. Fear of pain and of struggle are compensated by a single day, a single hour of that delirium which sinks all our existence; and the sentiment, dur-

ing its whole continuance, communicates a train of impressions as lively, and more pure, than the crowning of Voltaire, * or the triumphs of Alexander.

All indefinite enjoyments are from external objects If we wish to experience the value of glory, we must see him we love honoured by its splendour. If we are desirous to appreciate the advantages of fortune, we must have conferred our own on those we love. In a word, if we wish to create the gift of life a blessing, the object of our affection must live in our existence, while we must consider ourselves as the support of his happiness.

In whatever situation we may be placed by a deep-rooted passion, I can never believe that it misleads us from the path of virtue. Every thing is sacrifice, every thing is indifference to our own gratifications in the exalted attachment of love; selfishness alone degrades. Every thing is goodness, every thing is pity in the heart that truly loves. Inhumanity alone banishes all morality from the heart of man.

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* In the theatre at Paris, a distinction which successful dramatic writers sometimes attained.

If there are in the universe two beings united by a perfect sentiment of love, and should marriage have bound them to each other, every day on their knees let them bless the Supreme Being. Let them look down on the universe and its greatness. Let them view with astonishment, let them cherish with anxiety, a happiness which so many accidents must have concurred to bestow, a happiness which places them at such an infinite distance from the rest of mankind. Yes, let them view their lot with some degree of fearful apprehension. Perhaps that their destiny may not be too far superior to ours, they have already received all the happiness which we expect in another life. Perhaps for them there is no immortality!

During my stay in England, I was acquainted with a man of extraordinary merit, who for five and twenty years had been united to a woman worthy of him. One day, when we were taking a walk together, we met some people of the class which the English call gypsies, or Bohemians, who wander about in the woods in the most deplorable situation. I lamented the condition of people who thus were exposed to a combination of all the physical ills of nature. "Notwithstanding these distresses," said Mr. L. to me, "if, in order to be united to her,

(pointing to his wife) I had been obliged to abandon myself to this situation, I should have begged my bread for thirty years, and after all we should then have been happy!" "Oh! yes," exclaimed his wife, "even in that situation we should have been the happiest of beings!" These words are still impressed upon my heart. How delightful that sentiment, which, even in advanced life, inspires a passion perhaps more profound than it excites even in youth, a passion which collects in the soul all that time has robbed from the senses, a passion which turns the whole of life into one single retrospect, and stripping its last stages of all gloom, unsociality, and indifference, secures us the happiness of meeting death in those arms which sustained our youth, and entwined us in the ardent embraces of love. What! in real life, in the course of human things, can there exist such a degree of happiness, and is the world in general deprived of it, and are the circumstances on which it is founded almost never combined? This combination is possible, and yet to attain it ourselves, perhaps, is beyond our power. There *are* kindred hearts; and chance and distance, and nature and society, separate for ever those who would have loved each other through their lives, and the same powers connect our fate with those who are unworthy of us, whose

hearts are not in unison with ours, or who have ceased to feel the delightful union.

In spite of this picture which I have drawn, it is, nevertheless, certain, that of all the passions, love is the most fatal to the happiness of man. If we had the courage to die, we might venture to indulge the hope of so delightful a fate, but we resign our minds to the empire of feelings which poison the rest of our life. For some moments we enjoy a happiness which has no correspondence with the ordinary state of life, and we wish to survive its loss. The instinct of self preservation is more powerful than the emotions of despair, and we continue to exist without being able to indulge the hope of recovering in the future what the past has taken from us, without being able to find any reason to abandon our sorrow, either in the circle of the passions, in the sphere even of a sentiment which, deriving its source in a real principle, can admit of no consolation from reflection. None but men capable of resolving to commit suicide, can with any shadow of wisdom, venture to explore this grand path of happiness.*

* I am afraid least I be accused of having, in the course of this work, spoken of suicide as an act deserving of praise.

But he who desires to live, and exposes himself to the necessity of retreat; he who desires to live, and yet renounces in any manner the empire over his own mind, devotes himself, like a madman, to the greatest of misfortunes.

The majority of men, and even a great number of women, have no idea of this sentiment, such as I have described it; and there are more people qualified to appreciate the merit of Newton than to judge of the real passion of love. A kind of ridicule is attached to what are called romantic sentiments; and those little minds, who assign so much importance to all the details of their self-love or of their interest, have arrogated to themselves a superior degree of reason to those whose character hurries them into a different kind of selfishness, which society considers with greater indulgence in the man who is occupied exclusively with himself. People of vigorous

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I have not examined it in the ever respectable view of religious principles, but politically. I am persuaded that republics cannot forego the sentiment which prompted the ancients to commit self-murder; and, in particular situations, *passionate* minds, which resign themselves to the impulse of their nature, require the prospect of this resource, that they may not be driven to depravity in their misfortunes; and still more, perhaps, they require it during the efforts they exert to avoid them.

understandings consider the labours of thought, the services done to the human race, as alone deserving of the esteem of men. There are some geniuses who are entitled to consider themselves as useful to their fellow creatures; but how very few can flatter themselves with the possession of any thing more glorious than to constitute the happiness of another! Severe moralists dread the wanderings of such a passion. Alas! in our days, happy the nation, happy the individuals, that could boast of men susceptible of the impulse of sensibility! But, indeed, so many fleeting emotions bear a resemblance to love, so many attachments of quite a different nature, among women from vanity, among men from youth, take the appearance of this sentiment, that these degraded copies have almost entirely effaced the remembrance of the real object. In a word, there are certain characters prone to love, who, deeply convinced of the obstacles which oppose the happiness of this passion, which thwart its perfection, and, above all, threaten its permanence; and alarmed at the irritability of their own hearts, and those of others, reject, with courageous reason and timid sensibility, every thing that could excite this passion. From all these causes arise the errors adopted even by philosophers with regard to the real importance of the attach-

ment of the heart, and the unbounded tortures which those who resign themselves to its guidance are accustomed to experience.

It unfortunately is not true, that we are never captivated but by the qualities which bespeak a certain resemblance of character and sentiments. The charms of a seducing figure, that species of advantage which permits the imagination to conceive all the beauties by which it is captivated, and to see all the expression which it wishes, acts powerfully upon an attachment which cannot exist without enthusiasm. The grace of manner, wit, language; in a word, *grace*, more difficult to be defined than any other charm, inspires this sentiment, which, at first overlooked, frequently arises from something which cannot be explained. Such an origin cannot secure either the happiness or the duration of a connection. Yet when love exists, the illusion is complete, and nothing can equal the despair excited by the certainty of having loved an object unworthy of us. This fatal ray of light darts in, and awakens reason before it has detached the heart. Haunted by the opinion we had formed, which we must now renounce, we still love while we cease to esteem. We act as if there still were room for hope In our torture, as if all hope had vanished, we cling to

the image which we ourselves have created. We hang upon those features which once we considered as the emblems of virtue, and we are repulsed by something more cruel than hatred, by the want of every tender and profound emotion. We ask if the object on which we doat is of another nature, if we are wild in our paroxysms. We could wish to persuade ourselves that we are distracted, in order to belie the judgment we pronounce on the heart of those we loved. The past even no longer exists to cherish our recollections. The opinion we are forced to adopt recurs to the moment when we were deceived. We call to mind those incidents which should have opened our eyes, and then the misery we feel is diffused over every moment of life; regret is connected with remorse and melancholy; the last hope of the wretched can no more soften that repentance which agitates and consumes our frame, and renders solitude frightful, without rendering us capable of amusement.

If, on the contrary, there has been a single moment of life in which we have been beloved; if the object on whom we had fixed our choice was generous, was in any respect such as we had conceived him to be; and if time, the inconstancy of the imagination, which likewise

loosens the attachments of the heart; or if another object less worthy of his tenderness has deprived us of that love on which our whole existence depended, how agonizing are the sufferings which we experience from this overthrow of our scheme of life! How poignant the tortures of that moment when the hand, which so often has traced the most sacred oaths of eternal love, traces in characters, that stab to the heart, the cruel intelligence, that we have ceased to be the objects of affection! Oh! how painful, when comparing the letters which the same hand had written, our eyes can scarcely believe that the different periods at which they were composed, can alone explain the difference! How agonizing our sensations, when that voice, whose accents haunted us in solitude, thrilled through our agitated soul, and seemed to recall the fondest recollections; when that voice speaks to us without emotion, without embarrassment, without betraying the slightest movement of the heart! Alas! the passion we still feel, long renders it impossible to believe that we cease to interest the object of our tenderness. We seem to experience a sentiment which requires to be communicated. We imagine that we are separated by a barrier independent of his will; that when we see, when we speak to him, the feelings of the past will revive; that he will

again yield to the tenderness he once experienced; we imagine that hearts, which have once completely unbosomed themselves, cannot cease to cherish the ancient union; we imagine that nothing can renew the impulse which we alone possess the secret of bestowing; yet we know that he is happy far from us, that he is happy with the object least calculated to bring back the recollection of us. The cords of sympathy remain in our hearts, but those which once vibrated in concert to them are annihilated. We must for ever forego the sight of him whose presence would renew our remembrance of the past, and whose conversation would render it still more poignant. We are condemned to wander over the scenes in which he loved us, over those scenes that remain unaltered, to attest the change which all the rest has undergone. Despair is rooted in our hearts, while a thousand duties, while pride itself imposes the necessity of concealment, and no outward sign of woe must challenge the attention of pity. Alone in secret, our whole being is changed from life to death.

What consolation can the world afford to grief like this? The courage of self slaughter! But in this situation even the aid of this terrible act is stripped of that consolation which it

sometimes is supposed to bestow. The hope of exciting the interest of others when we are no more, that species of immortality, is for ever torn from her who no longer hopes that her death could inspire regret. It is indeed a most cruel death, to be unable either to afflict, to punish, or to engage the remembrance of the object by whom we are betrayed; and to leave him in the possession of her whom he prefers, inspires a sensation of anguish which extends beyond the grave, as if this idea would haunt us even in its silent retreat.

Jealousy, that passion, in its nature terrible, even when it is not excited by love, renders the soul frantic, when all the affections of the heart are combined with the most acute resentments of self love. Love is not the only ingredient of jealousy, as it is of the regret we feel when we cease to be loved. Jealousy inspires the thirst of vengeance; regret inspires only the wish to die! Jealousy is a more painful situation, because it is composed of conflicting sensations; because it is discontented with itself. It repents of the past, it preys upon itself, and the pain it occasions is supportable only when it sinks into melancholy. The affections which urge to activity in misfortune increase the sufferings we endure by every

movement we make to shun them. The affections which blend pride and tenderness are the most cruel of all. The feelings of tenderness which we experience weaken the spring and elasticity of pride; and the bitterness which it inspires, poisons the sweets with which the sorrows of the heart are accompanied, even when they are fatal.

Compared with the sufferings which sentiment occasions, the external circumstances which may disturb the union of hearts are of inferior importance. When we are separated by obstacles foreign to reciprocal sentiment, we suffer, no doubt, but we can both dwell with pleasure on the cause, and utter our complaints. The pain we feel is not connected with the most secret sources of the heart. It may recur to external objects. Nevertheless, souls of a sublime virtue have experienced in themselves invincible struggles. Clementina may be found in real life the victim of her passion, instead of triumphant. It is thus, in different degrees, that love overthrows the happiness of those who experience its influence.

There is another calamity which the mind shudders to contemplate, and this is the violent loss of the object we love, that terrible separa-

tion which daily threatens every thing that breathes, every thing that lives under the empire of death. Alas! this sorrow, which admits no limits, is the most formidable of all. How could we survive the object by whom we were beloved, the object we had chosen as the stay of our life; him who inspired that love which animates a character all formed for its dominion? What! could we exist in a world which he no longer inhabits, endure the lapse of time which no more brings back his delightful society, to live on the memory of the part gone without return, to hear in imagination that voice whose last accents were directed to us, to recall in vain that being who was the half of our soul, and to reproach him with the agitation of that heart which the touch of his beloved hand never more shall warm!

The observations I have made apply almost equally to the two sexes. It remains for me to consider what relates peculiarly to us. O women! ye victims of that temple in which you are said to be adored, listen to me!

Nature and society have disinherited one half of the human species. Strength, courage, genius, independence, all belong to men; and if

they surround our youthful years with their homage, it is to procure the amusement of overturning our empire. They act just as we do when we permit children to command, certain that they cannot compel us to obey. It is true, the love which they inspire gives to women a momentary absolute power; but it is in the whole system of life, in the course even of the passion itself, that their destiny resumes its inevitable empire.

Love is the sole passion of women. Ambition, even the love of glory, are so little suited to their nature, that very few of them turn their attention to these objects. In speaking of vanity, I have observed, that for one who rises superior, a thousand degrade themselves below their sex, when they quit its proper sphere. Scarcely can the interest of love extend to the half of life; thirty years remain behind when its existence is already finished. The history of the life of women is an episode in that of men. Reputation, honour, esteem, every thing depends upon the conduct which women in this connection observe; while even the laws of morality, according to the opinion of an unjust world, seem suspended in the intercourse of men with the fair sex. They can pass for virtuous, although they have caused

the most cruel pains which human power can produce in the soul of another. They may pass for honest, although they may have deceived the fair sex. In a word, they may have received from a woman such marks of attachment as would bind to each other two friends, two companions in arms, and which would disgrace the party who should prove himself capable of forgetting them. They may have received these from a woman, and disengage themselves from the obligation, by imputing all to love; as if one feeling, one additional gift, diminished the value of all the rest. No doubt there are men whose character forms an honourable exception to the observation; but such is the general opinion in this repect, that there are very few who could dare to profess, without the dread of ridicule, that delicacy of principle in the attachments of the heart, which a woman would conceive herself obliged to affect, if she did not feel its force.

It may be said that the tie of duty is of little importance to confirm the force of sentiment; that while the latter continues, it requires no aid from the former; and that it ceases to exist, when it must rely upon the support of duty. It is not perfectly true, however, that in the morals of the human heart attachment is

never strengthened by duty. There may be many intervals in the course of a passion when a sense of morality secures those ties which the wanderings of imagination might relax. Indissoluble ties present obstacles to the free choice of the heart; but a complete independence renders a permanent attachment almost impossible. To agitate and to interest the heart, the memory of former scenes are sometimes necessary. The remembrance of former interesting events, however, cannot produce this effect upon those who imagine that the past has no right over the future, upon those who do not admit gratitude to be in some measure the firm barrier which prevents the fluctuation of taste from becoming capricious change. In every thing in which the imagination is concerned there are ebbs and flows of kindness and of feeling, and if these intervals were not filled up by something of powerful tie, the attachment by which souls are united would often be entirely dissolved.

In a word, women are bound by the sympathies of the heart; but with men these ties are not so sacred. This circumstance is an obstacle to the permanence of attachment on the side of the men; for where the heart recognizes no duty, the imagination requires to be

agitated; while, at the same time, the men can rely upon the fidelity of women from causes different from the opinion they entertain of their warm sensibility. They rely upon their fidelity, because they esteem them, because they are aware that the impulse which prompts them to court the support of the man they love, is occasioned by motives distinct from the mere passion which they feel. This certainty, this confidence which indolence loves so much, often is repulsive to vigorous minds. Indolence is pleased to indulge itself, activity and force delight to encounter obstacles. In the various and opposite sources of pleasure, then, which, man wishes to combine, and on which he wishes to rear his happiness, the more that nature has done to promote his success, the more he covets obstacles to rouse his activity. Women, on the contrary, declining an authority which has no real foundation, seek a master, and fondly resign themselves to his protection. From this fatal disposition it often happens, that women who love without reserve, at length disgust instead of pleasing, and lose the object of their passion by the excess of their attachment.

If they rely upon their beauty for the permanence of their lover's attachment, they may easily be disappointed. Beauty has no certain

superiority. The charms of a new face may break the sweetest ties by which the heart is bound. The advantages of an elevated mind and distinguished powers may for a time attract by their splendour, but they ultimately repel all who do not rise to the same eminence. As women, too, are inclined to admire those they love, the men are fond of displaying to their mistresses the superiority of their talents, till the woman, at last, hesitates in the choice between the *ennui* of a common understanding and the arrogance of superior endowments.

Self-love, which society, which general opinion have intimately connected with love, is scarcely affected in the intercourse of men with the fair sex. The woman who proves faithless to her lover, degrades herself in his estimation by the infidelity she commits, and his heart is cured by the contempt for her which he feels. Pride, however, in the case of women, aggravates the sufferings which love inflicts. The passion itself gives the wound, but self-love pours into it the poison. The surrender of herself, in the eyes of a woman so precious a gift, inspires remorse and shame when she ceases to be beloved; when the grief which infidelity excites, at first the only sensation of which the mind is conscious, seeks relief from other re-

flections. Men who are the victims of inconstancy are consoled by the hopes of the future; women, on the contrary, are plunged into despair when they turn their eyes to futurity, and the collateral disadvantages which, when forsaken, they experience, multiply the sources of their misery.

There may be women whose hearts have lost all sense of delicacy. Such women are alike unacquainted with love and with virtue. There are, however, among those women, who alone ought to be accounted the sex, some who experience a prodigious difference in the intercourse they maintain with men. The affections of their heart are rarely renewed by new objects. Involved in the mazes of error, when they have been betrayed by the guide to whom they trusted, they can neither renounce a sentiment, the miseries of which they have experienced, nor open their hearts to *love*, by which they have been so cruelly tormented. Their life is blackened by a misery which has no limits, no end, no cessation. Some sink into degradation, others seek relief in a sentiment more allied to enthusiastic devotion than calm virtue. All bear, in some way or other, the fatal stamp of wretchedness. Meanwhile men command armies or govern empires, and scarce even re-

collect the name of her whom they have consigned to misery: the smallest feeling of friendship retains more impression upon their hearts than the most ardent passion. The circumstance of their connection may be quite blotted out from their memory; while the woman who possessed their affection is doomed to pine over the fatal recollection. The imagination of men has gained a complete triumph in gaining the heart of a woman; while the regret which she endures admits of no consolation. Men have but one object in love, while the permanence of the sentiment is the basis on which the happiness of the woman depends. In a word, men are loved, because they love. Women ought to dread, therefore, at once the sentiment which may arise in their own minds, and the passion which, in the heart of another, may attract their sympathy, and terminate in an attachment by which their peace is destroyed.

O, ill-fated mortals! ye whose hearts are delicately sensible to this passion! you expose yourselves defenceless in a contest where the men appear armed at every point. Remain in the career of virtue; continue under its powerful protection: within its sphere you will enjoy the surest safeguards; within its sphere you will be secured by impregnable bulwarks. But

if you resign yourselves to the passion of love, recollect that men are not fettered by public opinion; that they can govern their own hearts; that they will poison your happiness for ever, to gratify a fleeting passion.

It is not by declining that station which society has assigned them that women can escape misery. Nature, still more imperiously than the laws of man, has fixed their destiny. Resigning the hope of their affection, must we enter the lists as their rivals, and tempt their hatred because we must forego their love? A woman has duties to perform; she has children to rear. A mother possesses that sublime sentiment which is rewarded by the pleasure it bestows, and by the hope with which it is ever accompanied.

The woman who has been so fortunate as to meet with a lover whose activity of mind is connected with sensibility; a man who cannot endure the thought of rendering a human being wretched, and who combines honour with goodness of heart; who is faithful when no ties of public opinion fortify his fidelity, and who places the true enjoyment of love in constancy, has obtained a felicity with which nothing can compare. The woman who is the only favou-

rite of such a man may enjoy a happiness which sets all systems of reason at defiance. But since, even in the course of such an attachment, there are moments in which virtue is offended, where is the woman who, after the age of the passions is gone, would not congratulate herself on having escaped their influence? Who would compare the tranquillity with which the sacrifice of them is attended with the regret of disappointed hope? How bitterly must a woman regret that she has ever loved; that she has ever experienced that desolating sentiment, which, like the burning sands of Africa, parches the flower, blasts the stem, and leaves, a withered trunk, the tree which ought to spread its blossoms to the air, and shoot its branches to the sky!

CHAP. V.

OF GAMING, AVARICE, DRUNKENNESS, &c.

AFTER having discussed that fatal and sublime sentiment which connects the happiness or misery of our life with a single object, I proceed to speak of a kind of passions which condemn man to the yoke of selfish and ignoble sensations. These passions ought not to be ranged in the class of those which are supported by some internal feelings. Nothing, indeed, can be more repugnant to the pleasures which arise from the government of ourselves than subjection to selfish desires. In this situation, however, if we rely upon fortune, we expect nothing from opinion, from the regard, from the sentiments of mankind. In this view, as there is more independence, there ought to be more happiness. Nevertheless, these degrading propensities bestow no real enjoyment; they subject us to a gross instinct, and expose to an equal chance of disappointment with more elevated desires.

In these low passions we may discover the character of moral affections degenerated into physical impulse. Libertines, drunkards, gamesters, misers, are subject to two kinds of impulse; selfishness, and the necessity of being excited. In moral passions, however, we cannot be interested but by the sentiments of the soul, and even the selfish part of them cannot be satisfied but in some relation with others; while the only advantage of these physical passions consists in the agitation which suspends feeling and thought. They create, as it were, a kind of distinct material existence, which springs from ourselves, and returns to ourselves again; and gives to the animal part of man the ascendant over every other part of his nature.

In spite of the disgust which such a subject inspires, let us examine, however, these two principles of the passions; the necessity of being excited, and selfishness. The first produces the love of gaming, and the second avarice. Although we should be led at first to suppose that, to be addicted to gaming, we must be fond of money, this is by no means the source of this extravagant propensity. The elementary cause, the only thing, perhaps, which constitutes the enjoyment of all the passions, consists in the desire and the pleasure which the emotions of

the soul, when excited, bestow. The only good which we discover in life is something which produces an oblivion of existence ; and if this emotion and this agitation could be a durable state of mind, very few philosophers would hesitate to agree that it would be the sovereign good. There are, and in the third part of this work I shall endeavour to prove it, useful and constant distractions, which the man who governs himself always possesses. But the great mass of *passionate* beings, desirous to escape from that common enemy, the burdensome feeling of life, plunge into an intoxication, which, confounding every thing, destroys the reality of all around us. In the moment of emotion, judgment is silenced ; nothing but hope and fear are heard. We experience something agreeable in the indulgence of the reveries into which we are thrown ; the boundaries of nature are removed, things the most extraordinary appear possible, and the limits of the present and of the future recede or vanish before our eyes. In the tumult and rapid succession of the sensations which occupy the mind in a state of violent agitation, the very magnitude of the danger is a pleasure during the continuance of the action. It, no doubt, is a very painful sensation to dread the approach of danger, while we see it advancing. It is a kind of torture when we are at ease.

Gaming, however painful the sensation may be at the moment the stake is hazarded, is a kind of enjoyment, or rather a kind of intoxication. This state of mind sometimes becomes so necessary to those who experience it, that we see seafaring people voluntarily traverse the ocean to court the agitation of those dangers from which they have escaped.

The great game of glory is difficult of access; a green cloth and a pair of dice furnish a substitute. The agitation of the mind is a deceitful feeling, to which many men abandon themselves without reflecting upon the state which succeeds. They stake the fortune by which they subsist. They rush into battle, where death, or wounds not less dreadful, threaten them, and all to be freed from reflection and from prudence, to gain something of an instantaneous existence, in which to cease to think is happiness.

What a melancholy character of human destiny! What invincible proof of the wretchedness of our lot, to find that we are impelled to deviate from the natural course of human life, to intoxicate the faculties by which we judge of its value! The restlessness of individuals disturbs the whole world, and those innumerable armies which cover the surface of the earth, are

the cruel inventions by which soldiers, generals, kings, and statesmen endeavour to find in life something which nature has withheld, or to obtain some suspension of habitual ideas, and to excite that emotion which enables us to endure the burden of existence.

But, independently of all we sacrifice and all we hazard for the chance of such an enjoyment, there is nothing more painful than the state of mind which succeeds the emotion of which we have spoken. The vacuum it leaves behind it is a greater evil than the privation of the object in the pursuit of which we were agitated. It is much more insupportable for a gamester to cease to play than to lose his money. The language applied to the other passions is often borrowed from this, because gaming is a material image of all the sentiments which the greatest circumstances call forth. Thus the love of play assists us to form an idea of the love of glory, and the love of glory in its turn explains the love of play.

Whatever establishes analogies and resemblances is a proof of the truth of a general system. If we could succeed in connecting the moral nature with the physical system, the whole universe with one chain of thought, we

should almost have unveiled the mystery of the Divinity.

Most men, then, endeavour to seek happiness in agitation, that is, in a rapid sensation, which cuts off protracted expectation. Others, again, from choice and from disposition, attach themselves to the gratification of selfishness. Discontented with their relations and with mankind, they imagine that, by directing all their pursuits to themselves, they have discovered the secret of happiness, without considering that it is not only from the nature of the yoke, but from entire dependence upon himself, that the misery of man arises.

Of all the passions, avarice is that which gives the most scope to selfishness. To love money, in order to attain some object, is to consider it as means not as an end. There are men, however, who consider wealth as a mean of purchasing enjoyment, yet refuse to taste it. Pleasures of every kind must lead us to the society of others, while the power of enjoying them depends upon ourselves, and we throw off some of our selfishness by gratifying it with external objects. Misers are so fearful of the future, that they will sacrifice the present no less than the most elevated virtue. The sel-

fishness of such men is so great, that at last it sacrifices itself to itself. It loves itself so much to-morrow, that it daily deprives itself of every thing which can throw a charm on the day which succeeds. As all those sentiments to which the character of passion belongs devour even the object to which they are directed, selfishness destroys the comfort which it wishes to preserve, and avarice denies all the advantages which money can procure.

I shall not dwell upon the miseries which avarice occasions. We can discover no degrees, no shades in this singular passion. Every part of it is equally vile and miserable. The idea of this extravagant selfishness is almost inconceivable. How difficult to imagine a life which is wholly wrapped up in ourselves! How can men choose themselves as the object of their passion, without admitting some intermediate being between the object and themselves?

There is so much uncertainty in what they desire, something so repulsive in the feelings they experience, that we can hardly conceive how men can have the courage to act, when their actions follow constantly their sensations, and their sensations their actions: they must know positively the poor reward of their activity

and the real value of their efforts. How can men exist without being useful, and take the trouble to live, when they know nobody will grieve when they die?

If the miser, if the selfish, are capable of these reflecting intervals, there is a particular kind of wretchedness incident to such characters from which they cannot escape. They fear death as if they could enjoy life. After having sacrificed their present comfort to their future prospect, they feel a kind of rage when they see the period of their existence approaching. The affections of the heart add to the value of life, while they diminish the bitterness of death. Every thing selfish, however, poisons life, and embitters its termination. In a word, selfish passions are as much a slavery as those which render us dependent upon others. They render it equally difficult for us to acquire the government of ourselves, while it is in the free and constant exercise of this self government that repose and happiness consist.

The passions which degrade man, by giving a turn of selfishness to all his sensations, do not, it is true, produce those ravages and revolutions in his soul which inflict the sharpest misery it is possible to experience. The sufferings occasioned by low propensities, however, admit

of no consolation. The disgust with which they inspire others extends even to the person in whom they exist. Nothing in adversity can be more wretched than to feel that we cannot contemplate our own situation as truly deserving of interest. We are wretched, and yet feel no sympathy in our own breast. There is something cold in our whole frame, a sentiment of perfect solitude, and the impressions of grief are soothed by no consolatory reflections. There is nothing in the past, nothing in the future, nothing around us, to mitigate our suffering. We are unhappy, but without being able to derive aid from our own minds, without daring to reflect upon the different causes of our misery, without the support of any great retrospect on which misery can dwell with complacency.

CHAP. VI.

OF ENVY AND REVENGE.

THERE are passions which have no precise object, and yet embrace a great part of life. They exert an influence upon life without our perceiving it, and we often sacrifice happiness to their negative power. It is not their character to dazzle us with the sweet illusions of hope and of futurity: they only seek the gratification of that fierce sentiment which they inspire. These passions seem to be composed of the wrecks of all the other passions when disappointed. Of this number and description are Envy and Revenge.

Envy promises no enjoyments; not even those which terminate in misery. The man who is a victim to this disposition sees in the world many more subjects of envy than really exist. To be at once happy and superior is his object, and the value of his situation must be ascertained by the envy which it inspires. Envy is a principle, the object of which is some

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torment, and it exercises the power of imagination, that faculty which is inseparable from passion, upon one single distressing idea.

The passion of envy has no limits, because it has no end. It never cools, because it is not connected with any enthusiasm. It feeds only upon its own venomous nature; and the effects it produces augment its inveteracy. The man who hates another without cause, soon inspires an irritation which may give a pretence to that hatred which at first was unjust. Poets have exercised their fancy in displaying in every point of view, and under various aspects, the miseries of envy. How lamentable, indeed, that passion which feeds upon itself, and haunted by the image which inspires its torture, can find nothing to bestow consolation! Manifold as are the evils of life, we should be led to think that every occurrence which takes place is calculated to afford enjoyment to envy. This passion, however, is fastidious, and never thinks the calamities which happen sufficient to administer entire satisfaction. If there remains any consolation in misery, any hope amidst misfortunes, to the wretched, the envious man still detests and pines. To feed his hatred, he discovers in every situation advantages which the wretched themselves do

not feel. To remove the cause of his sufferings, the envious man must be superior, beyond all competition, in his fortune, his talents, his happiness ; and yet, on the contrary, he feels that no torments can equal the cold and blasting influence of his ruling passion. In a word, envy derives its source from that terrible sentiment of the human mind by which men detest to see the happiness they do not enjoy, and prefer the equality of Hell to the division of ranks in Heaven. Glory, virtue, genius, are assailed and broken down by this destructive power. Its influence is supreme. It limits the efforts and checks the flights of human nature. Those who blame, those who thwart, those who oppose, in a word, those who employ this destructive power, are sure to triumph.

But the mischief which the envious man produces does not bestow a happiness adequate to his wishes: every day chance or nature raise up new enemies against him. In vain he pursues them with unrelenting malice: his success brings him no joy; he feels himself inferior to what he destroys ; he is jealous of what he immolates ; he is humbled, even in his own estimation ; and this torment is encreased by every effort he makes to escape from the scourge.

There is another passion, the fury of which is terrible, and more formidable in the present times than at any other. This passion is REVENGE. That it is attended, in its gratification, by positive happiness cannot be doubted, as it owes its birth to some misery which is mitigated when it is extended to the cause from which it springs. There is not a man who has not, at some period of his life, experienced the feelings of revenge. It springs directly from justice, though its effects are often so repugnant to this principle. To do to others the evil they have done to us, at first appears an equitable maxim. That this passion is natural, however, renders its consequences neither less pernicious nor less criminal. Reason is particularly intended to oppose those involuntary movements, which lead to a culpable object; for reflection is no less natural than the impulse of passion.

It is certain, that we can with difficulty at first sustain the idea that the person that has plunged us into despair is happy. This object haunts the mind, in the same manner as, by a contrary process, the sentiment of pity conjures up the sufferings which it prompts to relieve. The contrast of our misery, and the hap-

piness of our enemy, produce a violent agitation of the spirits.

In misfortune too it is extremely painful to endure the prevalent or exclusive attention which a single idea obtains. Every thing which carries our thoughts to external objects, every thing that stimulates to action, beguiles sorrow. In action, it seems as if the situation of our mind were changed; and resentment or indignation at guilt being at first the most prominent features in the sorrow which we feel, we imagine that, by gratifying these emotions, we escape from all those which would have succeeded.

If we observe a generous and feeling heart, however, we shall find that revenge, instead of allaying misery, renders it more violent than before. The activity which the feeling of resentment employs, the effort we exert to subdue it, fill the mind in a variety of ways. After having inflicted vengeance, sorrow remains alone, with no idea but that of pain. By revenge we place our enemy upon a kind of equality with ourselves. We relieve him from the weight of our contempt; we are brought nearer to the level by the very act of punishing. If the effort we employ to revenge ourselves proves

abortive, our enemy then possesses that advantage over us, which impotent attempts, be their object what it may, never fail to confer. Every kind of error is excusable under real grief; but that revenge is greatly allied to culpable emotions is proved by this consideration, that it is much more rare to inflict vengeance, from the sensibility of our feelings than from the spirit of party or from self-love.

Generous minds, that have yielded to criminal passions, have done a prodigious injury to the dignity of morality. They have combined elevated principles with great faults; and the very meaning of words is changed by the accessory ideas which their example inspires. The same terms express the assassination of Cæsar and of Henry IV. and those great men, who claimed the right of dispensing with a law of morality, and making it give way to their sublime intentions, have done more mischief by the latitude they have given to the idea of virtue, than the execrated villains whose actions have encreased the horror which guilt inspires. In a word, whatever motives incite us to revenge, those who are tempted to yield to its impulse should never forget, not only that it can never confer happiness, and this they know too well; but they should also remember, that no political scourge can be more formidable.

This passion is calculated to perpetuate the calamity which the original offence occasions, even to the end of the human race ; and during those periods when the madness of party hurries men, in the strictest sense, beyond the bounds of virtue, of reason, and of themselves, revolutions never terminate till every individual ceases to be agitated by the necessity of preventing or avoiding the effects of revenge.

We flatter ourselves that the fear of punishment may prevent violent men from proceeding to certain excesses ; and in this opinion we betray our ignorance of the nature of the impulse. When men are coolly criminal, as they always weigh circumstances, such dangers, such additional obstacles may arrest their purpose. But *passionate* men, who rush headlong into revolutions, are irritated even by fear, if their opponents inspire this emotion. Fear stimulates instead of repressing impetuous characters.

There is one reflection which ought to serve as a guide to those who mingle in the great contests of men, which is, that they ought to consider their enemies as of their own nature. Unfortunately the nature of man is displayed even in the villain; and yet we never sufficiently avail ourselves of self-knowledge, in order the

better to divine the views of others. We say it is necessary to constrain, to humble, to punish; and yet we know that similar proceedings would produce, on our minds, only the most irreconcileable animosity. We consider our enemies as a physical force, which may be repressed, and ourselves as moral beings that can be governed only by our own will.

If there be any passion destructive to the happiness, and even the existence of free countries, it is revenge. The enthusiasm which liberty inspires, the ambition which it excites, give a stronger impulse to human character, and produce more occasions on which men are opposed to each other. The love of their country, among the Romans, was so greatly superior to every other passion, that private enemies served together, and with a common consent, the interests of the republic. If revenge is not proscribed by public spirit, in a country where every individual exerts the whole force of his personal character, where despotism not being employed to restrain the mass, every man has a particular value and importance, individuals will come to hate all other individuals; and the spirit of party, giving way in proportion as new events create new divisions, there will not, after a certain time, a single man be found, who

does not feel motives to detest successively all those with whom he has been acquainted in the course of his life.

Surely France, then, might display the fairest example which can be conceived of foregoing revenge, if animosity would cease to renew revolutions, if the French name, from pride and from patriotism, would rally all those who are not too criminal to permit their own hearts to form the idea of pardon. Surely this would be a heroic oblivion ; but it is so extremely necessary, that though aware of its astonishing difficulty, we are compelled to hope that it will succeed. France can only be saved by means of this mutual forgiveness; and the partizans of liberty, the lovers of the arts, the admirers of genius, those who are attached to a benignant climate and a fertile soil, all who can think, who must feel, all who wish to live, to encrease the stock of their ideas, or to cherish their sensation, loudly implore the salvation of France.

[illegible]

CHAP. VII.

We must have witnessed some political or religious revolution, in order to be acquainted with the full force of this passion. It is the only one which does not depend [illegible] all times and in all countries. This [illegible] must be developed by a kind of fermentation, occasioned by [illegible] extraordinary [illegible] through the [illegible] of it exist in the [illegible] of a great number of men [illegible] before any occasion has [illegible] [illegible] and to [illegible] [illegible]

Anything [illegible] such as disputes upon [illegible] literature, [illegible] some idea of the nature of the spirit of party. It does not exist, however, in all its force: it does not [illegible] that devouring influence which [illegible] generations and empires, [illegible] great contentions, in which the imagination can [illegible] in their utmost extent, all the motives of [illegible] and of animosity.

CHAP. VII.

OF THE SPIRIT OF PARTY.

WE must have witnessed some political or religious revolution, in order to be acquainted with the full force of this passion. It is the only one which does not display its power equally in all times and in all countries. This sentiment must be developed by a kind of fermentation, occasioned by some extraordinary events. Though the germ of it exist in the minds of a great number of men, it may perish with them before any occasion has ever occurred to call it into action, and to prove its existence.

Any trifling quarrels, such as disputes upon music, upon literature, may furnish some slight idea of the nature of the spirit of party. It does not exist, however, in all its force; it does not constitute that devouring influence which consumes generations and empires, but amidst great contentions, in which the imagination can find, in their utmost extent, all the motives of enthusiasm and of animosity.

First of all, we ought to distinguish the spirit of party from self-love, which attaches a man to the opinion which he maintains. It differs from the latter so widely, that the two propensities may sometimes be placed in contrast. M. de Condorcet, a man of various celebrity, had precisely the character of the spirit of party. His friends declare, that he would have written against his own opinion, that he would have disavowed and openly attacked it, without confiding to any one the secret of his exertions, if he had imagined that this expedient could contribute to the triumph of the opinion he supported. Pride, emulation, revenge, fear, assume the disguise of the spirit of party: but this passion by itself is more ardent; it inspires fanaticism, and prescribes the law to every man on whom it lays its influence.

Indeed, what in the world can be more violent and more blind than these two sentiments? During the ages that were distracted by religious quarrels, we have seen obscure men, without any idea of glory, without any hope of being known, employ all their efforts, brave all dangers, to serve the cause which they had embraced. A much greater number of men mingle in political contests, because in objects of this nature all the passions combine with the

spirit of party, and range themselves on the one side or the other. Pure fanaticism, however, in every age, and for any object whatever, exists only in a certain number of men, who would have been Catholics or Protestants in the fifteenth century, and now are Aristocrats or Jacobins. These are credulous spirits, whether they passionately espouse or attack old errors; and their violence, without any check, compels them to settle in the extremes of all ideas, in order to allow their judgment and their character to repose.

What is called philosophy, when enflamed to an extraordinary pitch, becomes a superstition, as well as the worship of prejudices. The same defects lead to contrary excesses; and it is the difference of situations, or the chance of the first direction, which, in the ordinary class, turns two party men either into enemies or associates.

The man of enlightened mind, who at first embraced the cause of principles, because his understanding could not descend to respect absurd prejudices, when he adopts a truth with the spirit of party, loses the faculty of reasoning, as well as the supporter of error, and very soon employs similar means in its defence. In the

same manner as we have seen atheism preached up with the intolerance of superstition, the spirit of party prescribes liberty with the fury of despotism.

It has often been said, in the course of the French revolution, that Aristocrats and Jacobins held the same language, were equally positive in their opinions, and, according to the difference of their situations, adopted a system of conduct equally intolerant. This remark must be considered as a natural consequence of the same principle. The passions bring men to a state of mutual resemblance, as a fever throws different constitutions into the same situation; and of all the passions, the most uniform in its effects is the spirit of party.

It seizes upon the mind like a kind of dictatorship, which silences every other authority of the understanding, of reason, and of sentiment. Under this yoke while it continues, men are less unhappy than when the other passions preserve their uncontrouled sway. In this state, the path to be pursued is prescribed as the end that must be attained. Men, under the influence of this passion, are unalterable even in the choice of their means: they will not consent to modify them, even to gain their object more

securely. The leaders, as in religious parties, are more able, because they are less enthusiastic. But the disciples make the mode, as well as the end, an article of faith. The means must be suited to the cause, because this cause, appearing to be truth itself, must triumph only by evidence and by force. I proceed to illustrate this idea by examples.

In the Constituent Assembly, the members of the right side of the Hall might have carried some of the decrees in which they were interested, if they had allowed men more moderate than themselves to speak: but they preferred losing their cause, by committing it to the support of the Abbé Maury, to gaining it, by allowing its defence to be conducted by a speaker who was not quite of their opinion in several other respects.

A triumph gained by a compromise is a defeat to the spirit of party.

When the Constitutionalists contended against the Jacobins, if the Aristocrats had adopted the system of the former, if they had advised the King to put himself in their hands, they might then have overthrown the common enemy,

without losing the hope of one day ridding themselves of their allies.

In the spirit of party, however, men prefer falling, if they can involve their enemies in their overthrow, to a triumph in conjunction with any of them.

When, by activity at elections, the Aristocrats might have influenced the choice of the men upon whom the fate of France was to depend, they preferred exposing it to the yoke of a number of abandoned men, to recognizing any of the principles of the revolution, by voting in the Primary Assemblies.*

The purity of a dogma is deemed of more importance than the success of the cause.

The more the spirit of party is sincere, the less disposed it is to admit of conciliation or

* The spirit of party, however, seems at last to have given way to motives of prudence. The activity of the royalists in the elections gave that preponderance to the counter-revolutionary party which lately threatened to overthrow the present constitution of France. In all the plans of the royalists which have been discovered, it is recommended to the partizans of the cause to endeavour to sway the elections.

compromise of any kind. As it would be to entertain doubts of the practical efficacy of our religion, to have recourse to art for its establishment, in a party men render themselves suspected by reasoning, by admitting the strength of their opponents, by making the least sacrifice to secure the greatest victory.

What examples have the popular party in France furnished of this uncomplying spirit, in every detail, as well as in the whole of their general system! How often have they rejected every thing that had the smallest appearance of a modification! Ambition can accommodate itself to every particular circumstance, in order to take advantage of all; revenge can even delay or change its mode of proceeding: but the spirit of party is like the blind movements of nature, which always proceed in the same direction. This impulse, once communicated to the mind, is seized with an impenetrability which, as it were, deprives it of its intellectual attributes. It is like a shock against some physical force, to speak to men who precipitately follow the course of their opinion. They neither understand, nor see, nor comprehend. With two or three arguments they meet every objection; and when these shafts have been exhausted with-

out effect, they have nothing left but recourse to persecution.

The spirit of party unites men together by the attraction of a common animosity, but not by esteem or cordial attachment. It extinguishes the affections which exist in the soul, in order to substitute, in their room, ties founded only on points of opinion. Party men are less gratified by what a man does for them than by what he does for the cause. To have saved your life is much less considerable merit in your eyes than to belong to the same party; and, by a singular code, this passion establishes relations of attachment and of gratitude only among persons who profess the same opinion. The limits of this opinion form also the limits of their duties; and if, in some respects, they receive assistance from a man who adheres to a different party from their's, they seem to think that no human confraternity exists with him; and that the service he has rendered is an accidental circumstance, which must be wholly separated from the individual by whom it was performed. The great qualities of a man, who does not profess the same political religion with them, cannot be appreciated by adversaries. The faults, even the crimes, of those who agree with us in opinion

do not detach us from them. The great character of this passion is, to annihilate every thing which does not coalesce with itself; and one prevailing idea swallows up all the rest.

There is no passion which must tend more to hurry men into every species of crimes than party spirit; for this very reason, that he who is under its influence is really intoxicated; and the end of this passion not being personal to the individual whom it governs, he conceives that, even in doing wrong, he devotes himself meritoriously. In committing crimes, he preserves the sentiment of virtue, and experiences neither the fear nor the remorse inseparable from selfish passions; passions, culpable even in the estimation of him who acts under their influence.

The spirit of party has no remorse; its first character is, that it considers its object so superior to every thing that exists, that it can repent of no sacrifice when so great an end is to be obtained. The depopulation of France was conceived by the ferocious ambition of Robespierre, and executed by the baseness of his objects. This monstrous idea was even admitted by the spirit of party itself; and men have said, without being considered as assas-

sins, " that there were two millions of men too many in France."

The spirit of party is exempt from fear, not only on account of the extravagant courage which it can inspire, but also by the security which it produces. The Jacobins and the Aristocrats, since the commencement of the revolution, have never for a moment despaired of the triumph of their opinion; and amidst the defeats which the Aristocrats have so constantly sustained, there was something bigotted in the certainty with which they proclaimed news which the most superstitious credulity could hardly have believed.

There are, however, some general shades which, without particular application to the French revolution, distinguish that spirit of party which belongs to those who defend ancient prejudices, from the spirit of party which characterizes those who labour to establish new principles. The spirit of party peculiar to the former is more sincere, that of the innovators more able. The animosity of the former is more profound, that of the latter more active. The former attach themselves more to men, the innovators to things. The former are more implacable, the latter more sanguinary. The

former consider their adversaries as impious men, the latter consider them as obstacles; so that the former detest from sentiment, while the latter destroy upon calculation; and thus there is less to be hoped from the partizans of ancient prejudices, and more to be feared from the opposition of their enemies.

In spite of these differences, however, the general characters are always similar. The spirit of party is a kind of phrenzy of the soul, which does not depend upon the nature of its object. It sees but one idea, in order to connect with it every thing which it meets, and is blind to every thing that cannot be conjoined with it. There is a degree of fatigue in the action of comparing, of balancing, of modifying, of excepting, which the spirit of party renders wholly unnecessary. Violent bodily exercises, an impetuous exertion, which requires no restraint, produces a physical sensation very lively and very intoxicating. The same thing holds in morals with that impulse of thought, which, liberated from all ties, and eager only to advance, precipitates, without reflection, into the most opposite opinions.

It never proves any sacrifice to the spirit of party to forego personal advantages, the extent

of which are known, for an object such as this passion represents, an object which has nothing specific, nothing ascertained, nothing known, and which the imagination invests with all the illusions of which thought is susceptible. Democracy or royalty are the paradise of these real enthusiasts. What they have been, what they may become, has no effect upon the sensations which their partizans experience in their favour. The spirit of party bestows upon them an interest which agitates all the ardent and credulous affections of which man is susceptible.

By this analysis, we find, that the source of party spirit is quite different from the sentiment of guilt. But if this philosophical examination inspires a moment's indulgence, what horror must the dreadful effects of this passion add to the apprehension it is calculated to excite!

There is no passion which can, to such excess, contract the understanding and deprave the morals. The human mind cannot develope all its force; it cannot make any real progress, but by attaining the most rigid impartiality, by effacing within itself all habits, all prejudices, and forming, like Descartes, an independent system out of all the opinions already intro-

duced. But when our thoughts are once tinctured with the spirit of party, it is not from objects to our minds, but from our minds to the objects, that our impressions proceed; we do not wait till they are received, we anticipate their arrival, and the eye bestows the shape instead of receiving the image. Men of talents, who, in every other circumstance, endeavour to distinguish themselves, then only employ the few ideas which are common to them with the most contracted minds of those who adhere to the same opinion. There is a kind of magic circle traced round the subject on which their confederacy turns, which the whole party beats round, and no one can cross; whether it be, that by multiplying their arguments, they are afraid of presenting to their antagonists a greater number of points of attack; whether it be, that in all men passion is more distinguished by its sameness than by its extent, more by force than variety. Placed at the extremity of an idea, like soldiers at their post, you can never prevail upon them to seek another point of view in the question; and adhering to some principle as to their chiefs, and to certain opinions as to oaths, they would consider it as an attempt to seduce them into treason, were you to propose to them to examine, to investi-

gate some new idea, to combine some new considerations.

This mode of viewing but one side of objects, and reducing them all to one signification, is one of the most fatiguing processes that can be conceived by those who are not susceptible of the spirit of party; and an impartial man, who has been the spectator of a revolution, at last is forced to despair of discovering the truth amongst these imaginary representations, in which both parties believe that they have demonstrated and established the truth. Mathematicians may remind them that certainty may be attained by accurate principles. In this sphere of ideas, however, in which sensation, reflection, and even language, mutually combine to form a chain of probabilities, when the most noble words have been dishonoured, the most just reasonings falsely perverted, the most just sentiments opposed to each other, we imagine ourselves plunged into that chaos, which Milton would have rendered a thousand times more horrible, if he could have displayed it in the intellectual world, confounding, in the eyes of men, the just and the unjust, vice and virtue.

A long time must elapse before an age, a nation, an individual, by mere knowledge alone,

can recover from the spirit of party. Reputation being no longer dependent solely on real merit, emulation flags by losing its object. Ijnustice discourages the pursuit of virtue; glory is rarely cotemporary, and fame itself is so warped with the spirit of party, that the virtuous man cannot make his appeal to future ages.

This passion extinguishes in superior men the talents they received from nature; and the career of truth, indefinite like space and time, in which the man, who thinks enjoys an happiness without limits, is shut against the spirit of party; and every hope, as well as every fear, devotes to a degrading slavery of belief minds formed to conceive, to discover, and to judge. In a word, the spirit of party must, of all the passions, be that which is most hostile to the developement of thought, since, as we have already observed, the fanaticism it inspires does not leave any choice in the means of securing victory, and our own interest lends us no assistance where the passion is sincere.

The spirit of party often gains its object by its perseverance and intrepidity, but never by its knowledge. The spirit of party, that weighs and balances, then becomes an opinion, a plan, an interest. It no longer is that madness, that

infatuation which cannot abandon a point without betraying all the consequences to which its leads, and the advantages it may be expected to produce!

But if this passion contracts the understanding, what influence does it not possess over the heart!

I begin with saying that there is an epoch in the French revolution, I mean the tyranny of Robespierre, of which it appears to me impossible to explain all the effects upon general principles, either by the spirit of party or any other of the human passions. That æra was out of the course of nature, beyond the limits of crime; and, for the repose of the world, we would willingly believe, that as no combination can enable us to foresee or to explain such atrocities, this fortuitous conjunction of all moral enormities is an unheard of occurrence which millions of ages have no chance of renewing.

But to pass over this period, how many criminal acts has the spirit of party occasioned in France! what devastation has it not committed in every age! It is a passion that has no kind of counterpoise. Every thing it encounters in its progress must be sacrificed to the object

it has in view. All the other passions being selfish, a kind of balance is frequently established between different personal interests. An ambitious man may sometimes prefer the pleasures of friendship, the advantages of esteem, to this or to that acquisition of power. In the spirit of party, however, every thing is positive, because there is nothing real; and the comparison being even made between something known and something unknown; between what is precise and what is indefinite, there is no room for hesitation between unbounded hope and any temporal advantage whatever. I use the word temporal, because the spirit of party deifies the cause which it adopts, hoping, if it triumphs, advantages beyond the nature of things.

The spirit of party is the only passion which erects the destruction of all the virtues into a virtue, which lays claim to glory from all those actions which men would labour to conceal, if they were performed from motives of personal interest. Never can a man be plunged into a more frightful situation than when a feeling which he considers honourable, prompts him to the commission of crimes. If he is capable of friendship, he glories to sacrifice it; if he possesses sensibility, he is proud to conquer his feeling. In a word, pity, that divine sentiment

which renders sorrow a bond of union among mankind; pity, that virtue of instinct which preserves the human species, by preserving individuals from the effects of their own madness, the spirit of party has alone succeeded in erasing from the soul, by withdrawing the interest of affection from individuals, and fixing it on whole nations and future generations. The spirit of party effaces the feelings of sympathy in order to substitute the ties of opinion, and represents actual sufferings as the means, as the pledge of an immortal futurity, of a political happiness beyond all the sacrifices that may be required for its attainment.

If men were to impress upon their minds a thorough conviction of the truth of this simple proposition, that they have no right to do evil in order to obtain good, we should not have seen so many human victims immolated upon the very altar of the Virtues. But since these compromises have taken place between the present and the future, between the sacrifice of the present generation and the advantages to be conferred upon posterity, a new degree of passion considers itself as bound in duty to overstep all limits, and often men, prone to guilt, affecting to be animated by the examples of Brutus, of Manlius, of Piso, have proscribed

virtue, because great men have sometimes immolated guilt; have assassinated those they hated, because the Romans had courage to sacrifice all they held most dear; have massacred feeble enemies, because generous souls had assailed their adversaries in power; and deriving from patriotism only the ferocious sentiments which at some periods it may have produced, have displayed no greatness but in wickedness, and have trusted only to the energy of guilt.

It will hold true, however, that the virtuous man may surpass in active and efficient force the most audacious criminal. The world still wants an illustrious spectacle in morals and character, that of a Sylla in the road of virtue, a man whose character should demonstrate that guilt is the resourse of weakness, and that it is to the defects of good men, not to their morality, that their bad success ought to be ascribed.

After having sketched out a picture of the spirit of party, my subject requires that I should speak of the happiness which this passion may bestow. There is a moment of enjoyment in all the tumultuous passions. This arises from the delirium by which the whole frame is agitated, and gives, in a moral sense, that kind of pleasure which children experience in the

sports, the enjoyment of which proceeds from exertion and fatigue. The spirit of party will be found a very good substitute for the use of strong liquors; and if the few rise superior to their present existence by the elevation of thought, the multitude escape from it by every kind of intoxication. But when the illusion has ceased, the man who awakes from the dream of party spirit is the most unfortunate of beings.

The spirit of party can never obtain what it desires. Extremes exist in the imagination of men, but not in the nature of things. Never does a spirit of party exist without its producing another in opposition to it; and the struggle is never terminated but by the triumph of the moderate opinion.

A spirit of party is required to combat with efficacy against another spirit of party, and all that reason censures as absurd, is precisely that which must succeed against an enemy who pursues a course equally absurd. That opinion which rises to the utmost height of exaggeration, transports to the lists where the combat is to be maintained, and bestows arms equal to those of the adversary that opposes. But it is not from deliberation that the spirit of party thus takes ex-

treme measures, and their success is not a proof of the talents of those by whom they are employed. The leaders as well as the private men must march blindly on, in order to arrive at the place of their destination; and he who should attempt to reason with extravagance, would not, on this account, be a whit wiser than a real madman.

The force that acts in war is a power wholly composed of impulse and effort, and the spirit of party is nothing but war; for all those principles constituted for attack, those laws which serve as offensive weapons, are dissolved when peace arrives; and the most complete victory of a party necessarily destroys all the influence of its fanaticism; nothing is, nothing can continue, such as it desires.

Doubtless, it is to the secret instinct which is derived from the empire which truth must ultimately possess over the final issue of events, of that power which reason must assume in times of calm, it is to this instinct that the horror which the combatants entertain for those who hold moderate opinions ought to be ascribed. The two opposite factions consider them as their greatest enemies, as those who will reap the advantages of the victory without

mingling in the contest; as those, in a word, who alone can gain real success whenever the tide begins to turn in their favour. The Jacobins and the Aristocrats are less fearful of their mutual success, than of the predominance of moderation; because, they consider the former as only transient, and are conscious of possessing similar defects, which always give equal advantage to the conquered as to the conqueror. But when the fluctuation of ideas brings things back to the bounds of justice and of possibility, the power, the importance of the spirit of party is gone, the world is again adjusted upon its own basis, public opinion honours reason and virtue; and this inevitable period may be calculated like the laws of nature. There is no eternal war, and yet no peace can be established under the direction of the passions; no repose without conciliation, no tranquillity without toleration, no party then, which, when it has destroyed its enemies, can satisfy its enthusiastic followers.

There is, besides, another observation, which is, that in this kind of war, the vanquished party always avenges itself upon men for the triumph which it resigns to things. Principles rise with lustre from the attacks of their antagonists; individuals fall under the attacks of

their adversaries. The man who, in his party, runs into the extreme, is not qualified to conduct the affairs of that party when it ceases to be at war; and the hatred which the opponents entertained for the cause, assumes the form of contempt for its most criminal defenders. What they have done to secure the triumph of their party has ruined their individual reputation. Those even who applauded them when they considered themselves as preserved from some danger by their exertions, are ambitious of the honour of trying their conduct when the danger is past. Virtue is so strongly the original idea of all men, that the accomplices are as severe as the judges when the general responsibility no longer exists; and the conquered and the conquerors are reconciled when the one renounce their absurd cause, and the other abandon their guilty leaders.

The triumphs of a party, then, never prove advantageous to those who, in the course it has pursued, have shown themselves the most violent and the most unjust.

But though the spirit of party, in all its sincerity, might render men indifferent to personal ambition, this passion, considered in a general

view, is never satisfied with any durable result. Were it possible even that it could be satisfied, if it were always to gain what it calls its object, no hopes could be more completely disappointed; no hopes ever ceased more certainly in the moment of enjoyment; for there are none, the illusions of which are less connected with reality. There is something real in the gratifications which glory and power bestow; but when the spirit of party triumphs, it is annihilated by the very success.

And what sensation does not the moment we awake from the dream produce! The misery which it occasions, it might even be possible to support, if it arose only from the disappointment of a great hope; but by what means can we redeem the sacrifices it has cost, and what must be the feelings of a virtuous man, when he finds that he has been guilty of actions, which, on the recovery of his reason, he condemns?

It requires some effort to make the confession, least it should tend to moderate the horror which guilt ought to inspire; yet there have been men, in the course of the French revolution, whose public conduct has been detestable, and who, in their private relations, have shown

themselves highly virtuous. I repeat it; in examining all the effects of fanaticism, we find it clearly demonstrated, that it is the only sentiment which can combine criminal conduct with a virtuous mind. From this opposition must arise the most cruel punishment which the imagination can conceive. The miseries which spring from the character have their remedy in itself. There is, in the mind of the man most deeply criminal, a kind of correspondence which alone can enable him to exist, and remain himself. The sentiments which have prompted him to guilt conceal from him its horrors. He endures contempt from the same motive which led him to deserve it. But what cruel punishment must that situation inflict which allows an estimable man to judge, to contemplate himself, after having committed such crimes! It is from a combination of characters similar to this that the ancients have deduced the most terrible effects of their tragedies. They ascribe to fatality the guilty actions of a virtuous soul. That poetic invention which renders the part of Orestes the most frightfully interesting of all theatrical exhibitions, the spirit of party is able to realize. The iron hand of destiny is not more powerful than this domination of a ruling idea, than that phrenzy, which every single mode of thinking ex-

cites in the mind of him who abandons himself to its influence. While it subsists, the spirit of party is fatality, and few men are strong enough to escape from its chains.

To such sensations, then, will those one day awake, who alone are sincere, those alone who deserve regret. Overwhelmed with contempt, when they require esteem; accused of blood and of tears, when yet susceptible of pity; insulated in the world of sensibility, when yet burning to form an union with the whole human race, they will experience those miseries, when the motives which have occasioned them have ceased to be real, even in their own eyes; and as the pledge of that fatal identity which connects them with their past life, they will preserve only remorse; remorse, the sole tie which binds two beings so different as that which they appeared under the yoke of the spirit of party, and that which they were formed by the bountiful hand of nature.

CHAP. VIII.

OF GUILT.

HORRIBLE as the idea must appear, it must be confessed, however, that the love of guilt is itself a passion. No doubt all the other passions lead to this excess; but when they have carried a man to a certain pitch of enormity the effect becomes the cause; and the guilt, which at first was only the means, becomes the end.

This horrible situation requires a particular explanation; and perhaps the reader must have been spectator of a revolution to comprehend what I am about to say upon this subject.

Men are preserved under the guidance of morality by two principles, public opinion and self esteem. There are many instances where the former is disregarded by those who respect the latter. The character then assumes an air of moroseness and misanthropy, which prevents men from performing many worthy ac-

tions which spring from a desire of esteem, without, however, extinguishing those virtuous sentiments which determine them to the discharge of their principal duties. But after men have broken down every thing like order in their conduct, when they can no longer fix themselves to any kind of principle, however slender, reflection, reasoning, being then too painful to be endured, a kind of fever rages in the blood, which imposes guilt as an absolute want.

This impulse becomes a physical sensation transported into the moral world, and even the phrenzy is very commonly manifested by external symptoms. Robespierre and the majority of his accomplices habitually had convulsive movements in their hands and in their heads. In their appearance was displayed the agitation of a constant effort. Men begin with committing excesses from the violent impulse they have received; but when it has reached its height, it always produces an involuntary and dreadful tension, beyond the bounds of nature, in whatever senses it may appear. It then is no longer passion that commands, but contraction that sustains the effort.

Certainly the criminal always thinks in a general way, that his aim is directed to some ob-

ject; but his mind is so distracted, that it is impossible to explain all his actions by the interest of the object which he is desirous to attain. Crime demands crime, and guilt sees no safety but in fresh enormities; it inspires an inward fury, which compels men to act without any other motive but the necessity of action. This effect can hardly be compared to any thing but the taste for blood in wild beasts, even when they experience neither hunger nor thirst. If, in the system of the world, the different natures of beings, of species, of things, of sensations, are connected by intermediate objects, it is certain that the passion of guilt is the link between man and the brutes. It is in some respects as involuntary as their instinct, but it is more depraved; for it is nature that has created the tiger, but man makes himself criminal. The sanguinary animal has his appointed place in the world; while the guilty man must overturn all order, to establish his sway.

The traces of reasoning, which can be discovered through the chaos of a guilty man's sensations, consist in the dread of the dangers to which he is exposed by his crimes. Whatever may be the horror which a villain inspires, he always surpasses his enemies in the idea he

conceives to himself of the hatred he deserves. Under the atrocious actions which he commits before our eyes, he is conscious of something more than we perceive, which strikes him with dismay; he hates in others the opinion which, without being aware of it, he forms of his own character: and the utmost point of his fury would be to detest in himself the remains of conscience, and to tear himself in pieces if he lived in solitude.

We are astonished at the inconsistency of villains, and it is this very circumstance that proves, that to them guilt is no longer the instrument of a desire, but a phrenzy without motives, without fixed direction, a passion which acts upon itself. Ambition, the thirst of power, or any other excessive sentiment, may prompt to the commission of crimes; but when guilt has arrived at a certain excess, it is withheld by no bounds: the action it perpetrates in the morning is prescribed by the atrocity of the preceding day. A blind force impels men to proceed in the descent whenever they have entered upon it. The term, whatever it may be, recedes as they advance. The object of all the other passions is known, and the moment of possession promises, at least, the calm of satiety; but in this horrible intoxication

man feels himself condemned to a perpetual motion. He cannot stop at any limited point, since the end of all exertion is repose, and to him repose is impossible. He must advance, not because hope invites him, but because the abyss is behind; and because, like the ascent of the Black Mountain, described in the Persian Tales, the heights sink in proportion as the traveller has surmounted them.

The prevailing sentiment of most men is, doubtless, the fear of being punished for their crimes; there is about them, however, a certain fury which prevents them from adopting the surest means, if they are at the same time the most mild. It is in present crimes only that they seek for indemnity against past. Every resolution tending to peace and to reconciliation, though it really were favourable to their interests, would be rejected. In measures of this description there is a kind of imbecility, and of calm, incompatible with the inward agitation, with the convulsive ferocity of such men.

In proportion as their natural propensities were kind, the more horrible is the irritation which they experience. It is much better, where you are threatened by the crimes of

others, to be exposed to those corrupted beings who have never made any account of morality, than to those who have been obliged to deprave their own minds, and to extinguish some virtuous qualities. The latter are more offended by contempt; they are in themselves more restless; they plunge into greater excesses, in order to divest themselves of ordinary combinations, which might recall to them the ancient traces of what they have felt and thought.

When men have once reached this horrible period, they must be cast out of society, for they can only distract it. That arrangement of the social order, which should place such a criminal upon the throne of the world, would not render him mild and gentle towards the men who were doomed to be his slaves. Nothing of restraint within fixed limits, even though placed at the highest point of prosperity, would satisfy those furious beings, who detest men as the spectators of their conduct.

The most energetic of these monsters at last come to be as anxious for hatred as other men are for esteem. The moral nature, in ardent minds, points always at something complete, and they will astonish by guilt, when there is no grandeur attainable but in its excess. The

aggrandizement of ourselves, that desire which, in some way or other, is always the principle of all external action, is gratified by the terror which we inspire. Men may fear, if they do not love. The terror we inspire flatters and encourages, breaks off our relations with others, intoxicates the imagination, and, by degrading the victims, seems to acquit the tyrant.

But I am aware that, in speaking of guilt, my ideas have been confined to cruelty. The revolution of France combines all these ideas in this horrible depravation; and, after all, what guilt is there in the world, but that which is cruel, that is to say, that which makes others suffer? What must be his nature, who, to gratify his ambition, could inflict death? What must be his nature, who can brave this terrible and solemn idea, the immediate application of which to ourselves cannot fail to appal every being who cherishes the desire to live; this irreparable act, this act which alone gives man a power over eternity, and enables him to exercise a faculty which is unlimited only in the empire of misfortune. When a man can deliberately conceive and commit this act, he is cast, as it were, into a new world; the blood is corrupted. From this day he feels that repentance is impossible, as the evil is irreparable. He no

longer considers himself of the same species with all those who combine the past and the future. If any hold could be laid on such a character, it would be by all at once persuading him that he is absolutely pardoned.

There is not, perhaps, a tyrant, even the most prosperous, who would not wish to begin anew the career of virtue, could he extinguish the remembrance of his crimes. But, in the first place, it is almost impossible, though we should make the attempt, to persuade a criminal that his offences are forgiven; the opinion which he entertains of himself is much more rigid in its morality, than the pity with which he could inspire a virtuous man; if, besides, it is contrary to the nature of things, that a nation should pardon, though its most obvious interest should dictate such a conduct.

The first dawn of repentance should be hailed as an eternal engagement to virtue; and those who, perhaps, took the first step towards amendment by accident, should be fixed beyond the possibility of retreat. But there are very few individuals who possess sufficient power over themselves to pursue such a conduct without belying their character. How can a man confide to the multitude a plan which can never succeed,

but by seeming not to be one? How can you compel a great number of men to observe a complex movement which must appear to be an involuntary proceeding, and induce the multitude to act in unison with the private feeling of every individual?

A man really criminal can never be recalled to virtue. He possesses in himself even still fewer means to assist the return to virtue and to philosophy. The dignity of order and of pure morality loses all its influence upon a depraved imagination. In the midst of the deviations which have not reached this excess, there always remains a portion of ourselves which may serve to recall us to reason. We always feel a reflection lurking behind, which we are sure to find when we are desirous to act upon it; but the man who is completely criminal has launched beyond all bounds, and escaped from all feelings. If he does feel remorse, it is not that which serves to restrain, but that which more and more impels to violent actions. It is a kind of fear which precipitates flight. Besides, too, every sentiment, every source of emotion, in a word, every thing that can produce a revolution in the heart of man, ceasing to exist, it must eternally follow the same path.

It were superfluous to expatiate on the influence which a phrenzy of this nature must exert over the happiness of mortals. The danger of falling into such a state is the very misfortune which threatens a man abandoned to his passions; and this danger alone is sufficient to frighten and deter the mind from every thing that might tend to involve us in it. Compared with this prominent colour, every thing else faints into shade. And so deeply struck were the ancients with the frightfulness of this situation, that, in order to describe it, they called to their assistance all the allegorical tales of mythology; nor is it merely the sufferings of remorse, but also the pain that accompanies each particular passion, which they have expressed in their descriptions of the infernal regions.

Most of the metaphysical ideas which I have just been endeavouring to unfold, are pointed out and illustrated by the mythological relations of the ancients respecting the final destiny of those who had signalized themselves by their crimes. The ever-streaming casks of the Danaides, Sysiphus labouring at an huge stone, which rolls down the mountain as often as he strives to roll it up, picture to us a faithful image of that necessity of acting, even without

any fixed object, which compels a criminal to the most painful and laborious action, merely because it relieves him from rest, than which nothing to him is so insupportable. Tantalus continually endeavouring to approach an object which as uniformly recedes from him, pourtrays the habitual torment of those men who have consigned themselves over to wickedness and guilt. They are equally unable to attain any thing that is good, or to desist from desiring it. In a word, the ancient philosophical poets were sensible that it was not enough to shadow out and describe the sufferings of repentance; the description of their hell required something more, and they thought it necessary to shew what the wicked experience even in the full career of their wickedness, and what their very passions for crimes made them endure, even before it had ceased to operate, and had been succeeded by remorse.

But it may be asked, why, under the supposed pressure of so painful a situation, the relief of suicide is not more frequently resorted to; for death, after all, is the sole remedy against irreparable ills? But though it but rarely happens, that the profligate lay violent hands upon themselves, it is not, therefore, to be inferred, that the profligate are less unhappy

and miserable than those who resolve upon and perpetrate suicide; and, without laying the least stress on that vague uncertain dread, with which the apprehension of what may follow this life, never ceases to haunt the mind of the guilty; there is something in the very act of suicide that argues a sensibility of disposition, and a cast of philosophy, which are altogether foreign to the nature of a depraved soul.

If we fling out of this mortal life, in order to rescue ourselves from the torments of the heart, we are not without a wish that our loss should be somewhat regretted; if we resolve upon suicide from an utter disrelish of existence, which enables us to appreciate the destiny of man, deep and serious reflections, long and repeated examinations of ourown mind, must necessarily have preceded that resolution; but the malice with which the heart of the wicked man rankles against his enemies, would make him dread that his death would enable them to breathe in security;—the rage that agitates him, far from disgusting him with life, on the contrary, makes him cling to it with a kind of rancorous rapture; a certain degree of pain dispirits and fatigues; but the irritation that accompanies the perpetration of crimes, makes the criminal fasten upon existence with a mix-

ture of fury and of fear; he beholds in it a kind of prey which he pursues for the pleasure of tearing it in pieces. It is, moreover, peculiar to the character of the eminently guilty, not to acknowledge, even to themselves, the miseries they endure: their pride forbids it. But this illusion, or rather this internal struggle and restraint, in no measure contributes to mitigate their sufferings; for the severest of all pain is that which cannot repose upon itself. The guilty man is ever restless and distrustful, even in the secret recesses of his own mind. He behaves towards himself as if he were negociating with an enemy; he observes with regard to his own reflection the same precaution and reserve which he puts on in order to shew himself in public. Under the alarms of such a state it is impossible there should ever exist that interval of calm meditation, that silence and serenity of reflection which is requisite for a full examination of truth, and in obedience to her dictates, to form an irrevocable resolution.

That courage which enables a man to brave the terrors of death, bears not the least affinity to the disposition that resolves upon self-destruction. The greatest criminals may evince intrepidity in the midst of dangers: with them it is an effect of mad folly, a kind of resource,

an emotion, a hope that prompts to action; but those very men, though the most miserable of mortal beings, scarcely ever attempt to cut short their existence; whether it be, that Providence has not armed them with this sublime resource, or that there is in the nature of guilt itself a kind of ardent selfishness, which, while it affords no enjoyment, excludes those elevated sentiments with which the boon of protracted existence is spurned and renounced.

Alas! how difficult would it be not to take an interest in the fate of a man who rises superior to nature, when he throws away what he holds from her; when he converts life into an instrument to destroy life; when he can prevail upon himself, by energy of soul, to subdue the most powerful movement of the human breast, the instinct of self-preservation! How difficult would it be not to suppose some generous impulse in the heart of the man whom repentance should drive to the act of suicide!—It is indeed not to be lamented that the truly wicked are incapable of such a resolve; it would, doubtless, be a painful punishment to an honourable soul, not to be able to hold in sovereign contempt a being which it can only loath and execrate.

SECTION THE SECOND.

OF THE SENTIMENTS THAT ARE INTERMEDIATE BETWEEN THE PASSIONS AND THE RESOURCES WE POSSESS WITHIN OURSELVES.

CHAP. I.

EXPLANATION OF THE TITLE OF THE SECOND SECTION.

FRIENDSHIP, parental tenderness, filial piety, conjugal love, religion itself, carry with them, in some characters, many of the inconveniences that arise from the passions; while, in other characters, these very same affections bestow most of the advantages that result from the resources we possess within ourselves. The *exigencies* of the heart, by which I mean to express the necessity we feel of some kind of return on the part of others, form the point of resemblance by which friendship and the sentiments of nature approximate to the pains of love; and when religion is heated into fanatacism, then all I have said relative to the spirit of party is perfectly applicable to religion.

But even though friendship and the sentiments of Nature should feel nothing of these *exigencies*, even should religion be untainted by fanaticism, still affections such as those could not be ranked in the class of the resources which man possesses within himself; for these sentiments, however modified, render us nevertheless dependent upon chance. If you are torn from the friend whom you cherish; if the parents, the children, the husband, whom it is your lot to have, are objects unworthy of your love, the happiness that may flow from these endearing ties is no longer in your power; and as for religion, intenseness of faith, which constitutes the basis of all its blessings, is a gift wholly independent of us: unassisted even by that firm belief, the utility of religious sentiments must still be acknowledged; but it is not in the power of any mortal to bestow upon himself the happiness which they can procure.

It is, therefore, under these different points of view that I have classed the subject of the three chapters which are about to follow, considering them as intermediate between the passions that enslave us and the resources which depend upon ourselves alone.

CHAP. II.

OF FRIENDSHIP.

I CANNOT forbear stopping short in the middle of the present work, being struck myself with surprize at the fortitude and firmness with which I analyse the affections of the heart; and divest them of all hopes of durable happiness. Am I then about to belie the whole tenour of my own life? Father, children, friends of either sex, is it my tenderness for you that I am going to disavow? Ah! no: from the earliest moments of my existence, I have neither sought for happiness, nor should I taste it elsewhere but in sentiment; and I have but too dearly learnt from my wounds all the pains that attend it. One day marked by happiness, one person distinguished by superior worth, make us cling to these illusions, and an hundred times we return to this fond hope, after having an hundred times lost it. Perhaps, even at the very moment that I am now writing, I fancy, I believe, that I would still fain

be loved; I still let my destiny hang entirely on the affections of my heart; but the person that has proved unable to subdue his sensibility is not, therefore, the less entitled to belief when he holds out reasons for resisting it; a kind of philosophy in the mind, wholly foreign to the nature of the individual character, enables a man to appreciate himself, as if he were a stranger, without having his resolutions influenced by the lights of his understanding; it enables him to behold himself suffering without deriving any alleviation of his grief from his faculty of observing it in himself; nor is the justness of one's reflections at all impaired by that weakness of heart which prevents our withdrawing ourselves from the stings of pain: besides, general ideas would no longer enable us to make an universal application, were we to intermingle them with the detailed impression of particular situations. In order to go back to the source of human feelings we must expand and enlarge our reflections, by keeping them uncramped by our personal circumstances; they have given birth to thought, but thought rises above them, and the true moralist is he who speaks not from invention or from reminiscence, but who continues to paint man in general, and never himself.

Friendship is not a passion, for it does not deprive you of a due dominion over yourself; neither is it a resource which we find within ourselves; since it exposes the objects of its choice to the various vicissitudes that may arise from difference of lot, or difference of character: finally, it impresses us with the sense that we require a return from others; and in this point of view, it makes us feel, in a great measure, the pains that attend love, without promising us the enjoyment of the vivid pleasures which love is wont to inspire. Man is placed, by the operation of all his affections, in this melancholy alternative: if to be loved is necessary to constitute his happiness, all system of certain and durable happiness is gone for him; and if he is able to renounce being loved, then a great portion of his enjoyments is sacrificed, in order to secure what may remain. Thus, to abridge our enjoyments requires no ordinary exertion of courage, for it only tends to enrich us at a future day.

And in the view that I am now to take of friendship, let me first consider, not those capricious connections, grounded on a variety of agreements, that can be traced to no other source than vanity and ambition, but those pure and sincere attachments that spring from

the uninfluenced choice of the heart; attachments, whose sole motive is an anxiety to communicate our sentiments and our thoughts, the hope of creating an interest in another's breast, the fond assurance that another heart throbs responsive to our sorrows or our joys. Were it in the power of two friends to blend and intermingle their beings, and to transfuse into each other's soul all the ardour of self-love; if either knew no happiness or no misery, but as the lot of the other was happy or miserable; if, in the mutual confidence, in the reciprocity of each other's sentiments, they tasted that serenity of mind, unclouded by suspicion, which arises from the certainty and the charm of unrestrained affections: then, indeed, they are happy; but what a source of woes may there not spring from the pursuit of such enjoyments!

Two men, distinguished for their talents, and destined to move in a conspicuous sphere, are desirous to disclose to each other their respective projects, and by a mutual communication of knowledge, to enlighten each other's mind. If they derive a secret pleasure from these conversations, where the understanding relishes also the charms of intimacy, and where thought unveils itself the very moment it dawns upon

the mind, what a sacrifice must we not suppose them to make of self love, before we can believe that they thus unbosom to each other, without appreciating their respective powers! that they exclude from this intellectual intercourse all comparative judgment on their respective merit, and that they obtain a perfect knowledge of each other, without allotting the class that either should occupy. I do not here touch upon those perfidious rivalships which ordinary competition is wont to produce; for I have limited the design of this work to the consideration of mankind according to their character, and as it shews itself in the most favourable point of view. The passions, from their own unassisted operation, produce such a mass of misery, that it were needless, in order to admonish us against them, to describe their effects on the hearts of those that are naturally vicious: as no man, in the first instance, imagines himself capable of committing a bad action, this kind of danger alarms no one; and, by suppposing it, a writer provokes no other antagonist but the pride of him who reads his work. Let us, therefore, suppose that neither an equal degree of ambition, nor an ambition of a contrary tendency, shall disturb the harmony that subsists between two friends. As it is impossible to separate friendship from the

conduct which it prompts, a reciprocity of good offices is one of the ties that must necessarily result from it: and who can rest satisfied that the success of the efforts which a friend may exert for the welfare of another, shall not alter the opinion he entertained of the sentiments of that friend? If he is dissatisfied with the degree of activity with which his friend espouses his cause; if he imagines that he has reason to complain of his want of zeal, then not only does he lose the object which he so anxiously desired, but the loss will soon be aggravated and embittered by painful reflections on the diminished cordiality of his friend's co-operation. Finally, by this admixture of sentiment with business, of worldly interests with the interests of the heart, we are affected with a particular kind of pain, which we are not over anxious to analyse, because it appears more honourable to attribute it wholly to sentiment; though it be likewise composed of a kind of regret, which becomes more poignantly painful by being blended with the affections of the soul. It, then, seems as if it were better to separate friendship altogether from what is not purely friendship: but its most powerful charm must vanish, if it ceases to extend itself to the whole of your existence. As friendship cannot, like love, feed and live upon itself, it must participate in every thing

that touches your interests, and awakens your feelings: but it is to the discovery and to the preservation of this other self, that such a crowd of obstacles arise.

The ancients formed to themselves an exalted notion of friendship, when they pourtrayed her image in the persons of Theseus and Pirithous, of Orestes and Pilades, of Castor and Pollux. But without dwelling upon what may be merely fabulous in the history of those heroes, it is evident that it was to companions in arms that these sublime sentiments were ascribed; for the toils and dangers which they encounter together, by teaching them to brave the terrors of death, facilitated their self-devotion to the happiness of another. The enthusiastic ardour which war inspires, arouses all the passions of the soul, fills up the various vacuities of life, and by continually holding up to the mind the terrific image of death, it silences all petty rivalries, and substitutes in their room the necessity of mutually supporting each other, of strongly struggling, of proudly triumphing, or of bravely perishing together. But all those generous emotions which spring from the noblest of all human sentiments, valour, are rather to be regarded as qualities that more peculiarly belong to

courage than to friendship: when the storm of war is blown over, there is but very little probability that this connection, which we imagined to have formed with our associates in danger, will ever be realized, or that its duration will be long.

In order to form a right opinion of the mere nature of friendship itself, we must observe its operation in the breasts of men who run together neither the career of military glory, nor that of ambitious strife: and then, perhaps, will it plainly appear, that in ardent souls friendship is, of all the sentiments which inform the human breast, the most rigorous exacter upon others: we require that it alone should fill up life; we grow irritated and peevish at the void it leaves, and injuriously impute it to the want of sensibility on the part of our friend; but even were we to experience an equal zeal of friendship for each other, we should soon be mutually weary and impatient of that reciprocity of return which it exacts.

To the picture of all these anxieties I know there may be opposed that of those frigid beings who love, as they do every thing else; who consecrate to friendship a certain day of the week; who regulate before hand with what degree of

influence over their happiness it may be safe to arm this sentiment; in a word, who yield to an inclination just as they discharge a duty. But I have already hinted in the introduction to this work, that it was merely my intention to follow and observe the life and lot of *impassioned* souls; for the happiness of others is sufficiently secured by the absence of the very qualities of which they are deprived.

It is habitual with women to make an unreserved communicativeness the first condition of friendship; and thus it becomes a mere attendant upon love: a similar passion must reciprocally occupy them, and then their conversation is generally nothing else than the alternate sacrifice made by her who listens for the hope of being permitted to speak in her turn: even the very persuasion, that they are confidentially communing with each other on sentiments less exclusive, carries with it the same character; and the reflection, that they are occupied with what regards *self*, intervenes as a third, that proves successively importunate to both. What then becomes of the pleasure that accompanies mutual communicativeness, if indifference be once discovered, if an effort be betrayed? The whole charm is then vanished for souls of sensi-

bility, and selfishness alone can prolong an intercourse with which the keenly piercing eye of delicacy has once perceived that friendship has become weary.

As every woman has the same destiny, they all tend to the same object; and that kind of jealousy, which results from the admixture of sentiment and self love, is the most difficult to be subdued. The generality of women are influenced by a cunning, which, however, does not proceed from falseness, but from a certain arrangement of truth: this secret they all possess, of which, nevertheless, they abominate the discovery. Never can the ordinary run of women endure the idea of endeavouring to prove pleasing to a man in the presence of another woman; and the whole of the sex seem to have but one common stock of pleasing accomplishments, of wit and beauty; while each labours to persuade herself, that she is enriched with these qualities from the ruin of her neighbour. There must, therefore, be established either a total suppression of the more vivid sentiments, which, by silencing all rivalry, would, at the same time, extinguish every kind of interest, or there must appear a substantial decided superiority, in order to clear away the

general obstructions which separate women from one another; they must provide themselves with as many pleasing accomplishments as they may imagine themselves to possess, and with a larger share of positive good qualities, before, on the side of the one, there can be perfect tranquillity, or, on the side of the other, a perfect self-sacrifice; then, and then only, would it doubtless be found, that the first, the dearest possession in life, would be the friendship of a woman. For, has the breast of a man ever experienced all the heart of a woman is susceptible of? No: the being that has proved, or may prove, as unfortunate as yourself, can alone pour the due balm into the bosom that is secretly corroded with the bitterness of grief. But should even that rare, that matchless object be discovered, might not absence, or one's peculiar lot, frustrate the happiness of such a blissful tie? Nor is this all: the woman who should imagine that she possessed in a man the most accomplished and feeling friend, or, in another woman, the most rare and distinguished one, the more thoroughly such a woman would feel all that was necessary in order to derive happiness from such an intercourse, the more would she be disheartened from advising it as the lot of all, as she must know it to be the rarest of all moral chances.

Finally, it would seem that two friends of different sexes, uninfluenced by any common interest, or any one sentiment absolutely similar, should, from the effect of that very opposition, approximate to each other: but should love happen to ensnare them, there then arises an undescribable kind of sentiment, a mixture of selfishness and of self-love, which makes either a man or a woman, whom friendship unites, perceive but little pleasure in the passion that possesses th m: these sorts of connections do not subsist long, or they soon break off altogether, whenever it is felt that the object on which they mutually commenced, ceases to be an object of love; for then it suddenly appears that it alone was their link of union.

But if, on the other hand, these two friends have no first object to engage them, they would then endeavour to obtain from one another that distinguishing preference. Where, however, a man and woman are not otherwise attached by love, they will endeavour to find in friendship all the self-devotion which that sentiment can inspire; and between two persons of different sexes, there is a kind of a natural exaction of a return, which solicits, or rather claims by degrees, and, as it were, imperceptibly, what passion only can bestow, how far soever either

may be removed from the consciousness of its influence. The preference which a male friend may give to the mistress of his heart, is previously and unreluctantly submitted to; but it is difficult to habituate the mind to contemplate the limits, within which the very nature of this sentiment circumscribes the proofs of friendship: it is imagined that more is given than is received, and from this very consideration we are more struck with the one than with the other, and equality is here as arduous a task to establish, as in all other relations; it is, nevertheless, the end and object which all those, who look for friendship, are known to have in view.

Love would much more easily resign the claims of reciprocity than friendship: whereever there exists a passion that inebriates, its place may be supplied by deceitful appearances; but the eye of friendship cannot be deceived: and when it proceeds to comparisons, it but seldom obtains the result it wished for: so rarely does what we measure and compute appear equal; there is sometimes discovered more parity between extremes; and sentiments that are unbounded more easily believe that they resemble each other.

How melancholy are the thoughts which this analysis suggests respecting the lot of mortal man! What! shall the disposition, that is most susceptible of warm *impassioned* attachments, have the most to dread from permitting its happiness to depend on an eagerness to be beloved? And is this reflection of a nature to make us deliver ourselves up to the cold embrace of selfishness? No: on the contrary, this very reflection ought to lead us to believe that we must exclude from the affections of the soul, even the selfishness of sentiment. Be satisfied with loving, you who are born with feeling hearts; for that is the only hope that never will deceive. Doubtless, the man who has known himself to be the object of a deep implanted passion, who every moment received new proofs of the tenderness he inspired, must experience emotions more exquisitely intoxicating: those pleasures which derive not from *self*, resemble the gifts of heaven; they exalt and imparadise the soul. But this felicity of a day poisons all the remainder of life; nor is there any other treasure that may not be exhausted, but the resources of one's own heart. The man who consecrates his days to the happiness of his friends and his family; the man who, by anticipating every sacrifice that would be made to

him, is ignorant of the lengths which the friendship he inspires would go to; the man who, while he seems to exist only in others, is unable, therefore, to calculate what he would do for himself; the man who finds, in the enjoyments he bestows, the full value and reward of the sentiments which he feels; the man whose soul is so tremblingly active and alive in procuring the happiness of those whom he loves, that there remains no unsubstantial void in his breast, where idle musing might engender disquietude and reproach; such a man, indeed, may risk indulging in friendship without any apprehension of danger.

But so refined a devotion is wholly without example among equals, it may indeed exist when inspired by enthusiasm, or impressed by the sense of some duty; in friendship, however, it is almost impossible, it being of the nature of friendship to beget a fatal anxiety for a perfect return; and it is because such is the constitution of the heart, that I have thought proper to hold out benevolence as a surer resource than friendship, and as more conducive to the quiet of hearts endued with *impassioned* sensibility.

CHAP. III.

OF FILIAL PIETY, OF PARENTAL AND CONJUGAL AFFECTION.

THE most sacred of the moral elements of the world are the ties that bind together parents and their children. On this holy duty is equally poised the basis of nature and society, and nothing short of extreme depravity can make us spurn at this involuntary instinct, which, in these relations, prompts us to every thing which virtue can impose: to these ties there is always attached an assured happiness, the performance of one's duties. But I have observed, in the introduction to this work, that, as I uniformly considered virtue as the basis of the existence of man, I would touch upon his duties and affections only as far as they had relation to his happiness; it therefore now remains to examine what enjoyments of sentiment parents and children may derive from each other.

The same principle, in consequences so fruitful, is equally applicable to these affections as to all the other attachments of the heart: if the soul be so warmly bent on them as to experience that imperious want of reciprocity, happiness is then no more, and misfortune takes its place. There is in these attachments a natural inequality, that never admits of an affection of the same nature, or to the same degree; one of them is always stronger, and thereby creates complaints against the other, whether it be, that children cherish their parents more tenderly than they are beloved by their parents, or that parents feel for their offspring sentiments more ardent than those which their children are impressed with for them.

Let us begin with the first supposition. Parents, in order to make themselves beloved by their infant children, have many of the advantages and the inconveniencies of kings: much less is expected from children than is done for them: we are flattered with the least effort of kindness on their part: every thing they do for you is appreciated in a relative manner, and this kind of comparative appreciation is far more easily satisfied. The conduct of children towards us is never estimated from what we require of them, but from what we are accustomed to ex-

pect; and it is much less difficult to raise an agreeable surprise to habit than to the imagination. Parents, therefore, almost invariably assume that kind of dignity which conceals itself, as much from calculation as from inclination. They are desirous to be judged of by what they conceal: they are desirous that their rights should be attended to, at the moment that they themselves are prepared to forget them. But this enchantment, like all others, can produce but a temporary effect. Sentiment, that loves to usurp, daily pants after new conquests; even at the moment when it leaves nothing unobtained, it repines at the limited powers of man in loving: how, then, should it endure to be kept voluntarily at a certain distance?

The heart aims at equality, and when gratitude is changed into real tenderness, it drops its character of deference and submission. He who loves, imagines that he is no longer indebted; he rates benefits much lower than sentiment, their inexhaustible source; and if we are continually for keeping up differences and superiorities, the heart is disgusted, and withdraws. Parents, mean time, neither know how, nor are they scarcely ever disposed, to adopt this new system; and difference of age is, perhaps, the reason why they never draw themselves

down to their children without some *sacrifice*. Nothing, however, but selfishness, can ever put up with an happiness which is purchased by that term.

Whatever may be the self-devotion of affectionate and respectful children, the new-born inclinations, the novel duties that attract them, fill their parents with a secret moroseness, which they must always experience, because they will never acknowledge it, even to themselves. Whenever parents harbour for their children such an intense and thorough affection, as to live only in them, to make their future welfare their only hope, to look upon the term of their own life as concluded, in order to espouse the interests of their children with all the ardour of personal identity; what I am about to say will, in that view, be superfluous. But, when parents remain concentred within themselves, their children must appear to them merely in the light of successors, I would almost say of rivals; of subjects who aspire to independence; of friends in whose conduct they observe nothing but their omissions: of mere dependants, upon whose gratitude they rely, and therefore neglect to please them; of partners that are bound down to you, but to whom you are not bound down: in a word, this is a

kind of union in which parents, by giving a boundless latitude to the idea of their rights, seem to require an acknowledgment of this boundlessness of power, of which, though they assume it, they do not attempt to avail themselves. In fine, the generality of parents labour under this habitual mistake: they are over confident in their authority, the sole obstacle that can counteract that excess of tenderness with which they would be cherished, without being sensible, on the contrary, that in this relation of father to children, as in every other, where there exists any degree of superiority, it is more peculiarly for him who enjoys the advantage of that superiority, to shew a dependance of sentiment, which, while it is necessary, is also highly amiable. In cases, indeed, where either an unusually mild simplicity marks the character of parents, or where they soar to a superiority so supereminent as that their children are happy rather to worship than obey them, these observations are of no avail; but to the more ordinary situations of life, and not to such, they were previously intended to apply.

In the second supposition, perhaps the most natural, the maternal sentiment, accustomed, by the attentions which it lavishes on the feebleness of helpless infancy, to forego all claims

to a return, awakens enjoyments the most lively and the must pure, which carry with them all the characteristics of passion, unexposed to the storms of the internal commotions of the soul, and liable only to those of fate; but so lamentably true is it, that as soon as the call for reciprocity is felt, the felicities of sentimental enjoyment fade away; that infancy is the æra of life, which breathes into the breast of most parents the most lively attachment, whether it be that, the absolute dominion we then exercise over our children identifies them with ourselves, or that their dependance on us inspires a kind of interest more attracting than even the successful efforts which they owe only to themselves; or whether, all that we expect from children being only in the bud of hope, we experience at once all that is most delightful both in reality and in illusion, the immediate sentiment we feel, and that which we flatter ourselves we shall enjoy. But the reality of events soon holds up our children to us in a far different light: we behold them as educated by us, not for ourselves, but for others; we view them as starting into the career of life, while the hand of time conducts us to the back-ground; we look upon them as thinking of us only from recollection, but of others from hope. Under these impressions, where are the parents, of

wisdom so sedate, as to enable them to regard the passions of youth as they do the amusements of childhood, and to check any rising desire to bear a greater part in the one than in the other?

Education most undoubtedly exerts a powerful influence over the disposition and the mind; but it is far easier to instil your opinions into your pupil than to inspire him with your will. The *self* of your child is made up of your instructions, of the books you have given him to read, of the persons with whom you have surrounded him: but though in every thing you may discover the traces of your fostering hand, your commands have no longer the same ascendant over him: you have formed a man; but what he has borrowed from you has become himself, and contributes as much as your reflections to build his independence. In fine, successive generations, being often doomed, by the duration of the life of man, to exist simultaneously, fathers and children forget, in the reciprocity of sentiment they exact from each other, from what different points of view their eyes survey the world. The mirror that inverts the objects it represents, does not so strangely misshape the face of things, as the

period of age, which places them in the future or in the past.

There is nothing which requires a greater degree of delicacy, on the part of parents, than the method which they ought to pursue, in order to regulate the lives of their children, without alienating their affections: for it is in vain to attempt to sacrifice their love to the hope of being useful to them by precept; as every permanent influence over their conduct terminates with the power of sentiment: it is very rare, therefore, that we hit the just medium in the duties which this relation prescribes.

The affection of children for their parents is compounded, if I may so speak, of all the events of their life. There is no other attachment, in the composition of which there enters a greater number of causes foreign to what captivates the heart; there is, therefore, none, the enjoyment of which is more uncertain and precarious. The ascendant of nature and of duty, which constitutes the principal grounds of this connection, cannot, indeed, be annihilated: but as soon as we come to love our children with a passionate fondness, we stand in need of something altogether different from what they

owe us ; and in the sentiment we thus harbour for them, we run the same risques as those we are exposed to from the affections of the soul : in a word, this exaction of a return, this call for reciprocity, the bane and destruction of the only celestial blessing which man enjoys, the faculty of loving; this exaction of reciprocity proves still more baneful in the relation of parants to their children, because it comes accompanied with an idea of authority, and is thereby at once both more noxious and more natural. All the equality that exists in the sentiment of love is scarcely sufficient to remove from its solicitude for a return the idea of some kind of right. It would seem as if the person, who loves most ardently, attacks, by this very superiority, the independence of the other: and how much more powerfully does not this inconvenience occur in the relations of parents to their children? The more claims are they possessed of, the more cautiously should they avoid enforcing them, if they desire to be loved; but as soon, however, as an affection becomes strongly *passionate*, it can no longer rest upon itself; it must necessarily exert its action upon others.

Wherever conjugal affection prevails, it bestows the enjoyments either of love or of friend-

ship; but both the one and the other, I think, I have already analysed. There is, however, in this connection something peculiar, both in good and in evil, which ought not to be left unexplored. There is some happiness in having discovered in the path of life such circumstances, as, without the assistance even of sentiment, unite and blend together two *selves*, instead of opposing them to each other; there is an happiness in having entered into that partnership sufficiently early to enable the recollections of youth to come in mutual endeavours to the alleviation of that death which commences in the very middle of life: but independently of all that may be so easily conceived respecting the difficulty of suiting each other, the multiplicity of relations of every kind that result from common interests, calls up a variety of occasions for wounding each other's feelings, which, though they do not originate in sentiment, finish, however, by destroying it.

No person can pretend to know beforehand the length to which may be drawn the history of each day, especially if we but attend to the variety of impressions which a day may produce, and in what is generally called *housewifery*, there, every moment, start up certain difficulties which may extinguish for ever all that

is exalted in sentiment. The conjugal, therefore, of all the ties, is that wherein there is least probability of enjoying the romantic happiness of the heart: in order to preserve peace under the influence of that connection, it is necessary to exercise a kind of empire over one's self, to be endued with a certain degree of energy, and a readiness to make sacrifices, qualities which border much closer on the pleasures of virtue than on the enjoyments of passion.

The iron hand of fate incessantly drives man into what is imperfect and incomplete: it seems that, from the very nature of things, happiness is not impossible; that from a re-union of what is scattered through the world, the wished-for perfection might be attained. But in labouring to rear this edifice, one stone oversets another, one advantage excludes another which doubled it in value. Sentiment, in its fullest force, is, from its nature, apt to exact a return; and this exaction banishes the affection which we are eager to inspire. It is not unusual to see a man, inconsistent in his wishes, keep himself aloof from the person who loves him, merely because he is too tenderly beloved; and while he sees himself the object to which every sacrifice is made, and every desirable quality stands subservient, he is obliged to confess that the very

excess of this attachment to him is sufficient to obliterate every vestige of its blessings.

What inference, what strain of admonition can there then be drawn from these reflections? The conclusion which I have already advanced is, that ardent souls suffer from friendship, and from the ties of nature, many of the miseries attendant upon passion; and that beyond the line of duty and of the enjoyments which we can derive from our own reflections, sentiment, of whatever nature it may be, is never a resource existing within ourselves; it invariably places happiness at the mercy of chance, of a peculiar disposition, or of the attachment of another heart.

CHAP. IV.

OF RELIGION.

IT is not my object to describe religion by all the various excesses that accompany fanaticism. This is a subject which the observations of ages and the disquisitions of philosophy have exhausted; besides, what I have already said respecting the spirit of party is applicable to this phrenzy, as well as to every other which is occasioned by the ascendancy of an opinion: neither is it my intention to speak of those religious notions upon which hangs the only hope that cheers the close of our existence. The theism of enlightened men, and of souls of sensibility, is the offspring of genuine philosophy; and it is by the consideration of all the resources which man can derive from his reason, that he must weigh this idea, too grand in itself not to be still of an immense weight, notwithstanding the uncertainties that surround it.

But religion, in its general acceptation, supposes an unshakeable faith, and whoever has received from heaven this profound conviction, can find no void in life: this faith suffices and fills all its vacuities. In this respect, indeed, the influence of religion is truly powerful, and in this very same respect ought it to be considered as a gift as little dependent upon one's self, as beauty, genius, or any advantage or faculty which we hold from nature, and which no human effort can produce.

And how could it be in the power of the will to direct our disposition with regard to religion? In matters of faith it is impossible that we act upon ourselves: thought is indivisible: we cannot detach one particle from it to make it work upon another: we hope or we fear, we doubt or we believe, according to the structure of our mind and the nature of the combinations which it engenders.

After having fully established that faith is not a faculty which it depends upon ourselves to acquire, let us examine with impartiality how far it may be conducive to happiness, and begin with the more prominent advantages which it holds forth.

The imagination is the most ungovernable of all the moral powers of man: he is alternately tormented by his desires and his doubts. Religion opens a long career to hope, and marks out to the will the precise path it should pursue: under these two points of view, it is highly consolatory to the mind; its futurity is the reward of the past, and as it makes every thing tend to the same end, it gives to every thing the same degree of interest. Life passes away, as it were, within ourselves; external circumstances serve only to exercise an habitual sentiment: what may happen, is nothing; the determination we have taken, is all; and this determination, continually under the dominion of a divine law, can never have made the mind experience a moment of uncertainty. Once secured against the intrusion of remorse, we can never know those regrets of the heart and of the mind, that reproach us even with the work of mere chance, and which judge of our resolutions by their effects. Miscarriage and success afford to the conscience of the devout neither pain nor satisfaction.

Religious morality leaves nothing vague or unsettled as to the actions of life; their decision is always simple. When a true Christian

has discharged his duties, all search after his happiness is over: he makes no enquiry into the nature of the lot that has fallen to him: he knows neither what he has to desire, nor what he has to fear; his only certainty regards his duties. The noblest qualities of the soul, generosity, sensibility, far from repressing all internal contentions, may, in the bustle and struggle of the passions, oppose to each other affections of equal force; but religion furnishes a code which provides a law to regulate, under all circumstances, what actions we have to perform. In the present, every thing is fixed; in the future, every thing is indefinite: the soul, in fine, experiences a state of being always calm and unruffled, that is, never aroused by any thing vivid and impressive,—she is encompassed by an atmosphere that suffices to light her in the dark, though it be not as resplendent as the day; and this state, by rescuing her from misery, saves, after all, at least two-thirds of our mortal life.

If such be the advantages of religion in the ordinary lot of man, if it thus makes up for the enjoyments of which it deprives us, it must be of sovereign utility in desperate situations.

When a man, after the perpetration of some heinous crime, becomes immediately alive to the stings of true remorse, such a situation of the soul must prove unsupportable without assistance and relief from supernatural notions. Undoubtedly, the most efficacious of all kinds of repentance would be the performance of virtuous actions; but at the close of life, or even in the morning of youth, where is the guilty person that can hope to perform as much good as he has committed wickedness? What sum of happiness can be equivalent to the intenseness of the pain? Who is armed with sufficient strength to attempt expiations by blood or tears? An ardent devotion may appear sufficient to the imagination of repentant guilt; and in these deep and dreary solitudes, where the Carthusian monks and the monks of La Trappe adopted a mode of life so contrary to reason, these converted criminals found a state of existence which best suited the agitation of their souls. Perhaps, even men, whom the vehemence of their nature might have driven to the perpetration of enormous crimes, by having thus delivered themselves up, from their infancy, to religious fanaticism, may have buried, in the gloom of cloisters, that fire of imagination which subverts empires and desolates

the globe. It is by no means my intention to encourage, by these reflections, institutions of that kind; but they are made with a view to shew, that passion, under all its forms, is the most formidable enemy of man, and that it alone raises all the difficulties that perplex and harass his journey through life.

In that class of society which is devoted to mechanical labour, the imagination is likewise the faculty, the effects of which are most to be dreaded. I cannot pretend to say that religious faith has been extinguished in the breast of the French people: but if so, it will be difficult, indeed, to restore to them all the real enjoyments which they derived from that idea. The revolution, for some time at least, in a great measure supplied their place. Interest was, at first, one of the principal charms by which it fascinated the people; nor was it less attractive from the bustle and agitation which it infused into common life. The rapid succession of events, the various emotions they awakened, produced a kind of intoxication, from the rapidity of this hurried motion, which, by quickening the pace of time, left no sensation of a void, nor even of the anxieties that accompany the consciousness of existence.

Habit has led us, too generally, to suppose that the ambition of the populace was limited to the possession of physical advantages; but they have been found passionately devoted to the revolution, because it afforded them the pleasure of intermeddling in public affairs, of influencing their direction, of participating in their success. All the passions that agitate idle speculative men were betrayed and evinced by those who were familiar only with the necessity of labour, and with the value of the wages it produced. But when the established form of any government whatever shall bring back three-fourths of the community to the exercise of those occupations which daily ensure a subsistence for the morrow; when the disorder and confusion attendant upon a revolution shall no longer give each individual the chance of obtaining all the advantages of fortune, which opinion and industry had, during the lapse of ages, accumulated in an empire of twenty-five millions of men, what treasure can there be held out to hope, which, like religious faith, can proportion itself to the desires of all those who wish to drink at its source? How powerful the magic of that idea which at once contains and confines our actions within the closest circle, while it gratifies passion in all its wild

and boundless cravings of hope, of an object and of futurity?

If the age in which we live be the æra when the reasonings of philosophy have most fundamentally shook the possibility of an implicit belief, it must also be confessed that the present times have likewise exhibited the most striking proofs of the power and influence of religion. The mind has incessantly before its eye the sight of those innocent victims who cruelly perished under a reign of terror and of blood, dragging after them all that they held dear in this world. Youth, beauty, virtue, talents, were, by a power more arbitrary, and not less irrevocable than fate, promiscuously plunged into the night of the grave.

The ancients spurned at the terrors of death from an utter disgust of life. But we have seen women, whose nature it is to be timid; youths, who had scarcely escaped from the years of childhood; husbands and wives, who, in their mutual love, enjoyed every thing that life can afford, and for which alone its loss can be regretted; all these have we seen advancing unappalled towards eternity, which they did not seem to believe could separate them, without once recoiling at the view of that abyss where

imagination shudders at its own creations, and though much less weary than we with the sufferings of life, still facing more intrepidly the approaching horrors of death.

Finally, there has appeared a man upon whose head every earthly prosperity had been showered down, for whom the ordinary lot of mortals seemed to have been expanded and ennobled, and to have even borrowed and realized some of the golden dreams of imagination; monarch of twenty-five millions of men, he had entrusted to his own hands the whole mass of their aggregate happiness, in order to secure to him alone the power of dispensing it anew; for, in this exalted rank and supereminent situation, his soul had fashioned itself for the enjoyment of every felicity; and fortune, which for a length of ages had assumed, in favour of his race, the character of *immutable*, never held out to his reflections even the chance of adversity, nor so much as hinted to his thoughts the possibility of pain; wholly unacquainted with the sense of remorse (for his conscience taught him to believe he was virtuous) there never even glanced upon his breast any impressions but such as were peaceful and serene. As neither his lot in life, nor the cast of his character, had prepared or inured him to the shafts of misfor-

tune, it was natural to suppose that his mind must have sunk under the first gust of adversity: this man, however, who did not possess sufficient energy for the assertion of his power, and who left doubts concerning his courage, as long as he seemed to want it in repelling his enemies: this man, whose timid and wavering disposition did not permit him either to confide in the counsels of others, or wholly to adopt his own: this man, on a sudden, displayed a soul capacious of the sternest resolutions, for he resolved to suffer and to die. Lewis XVI. found himself seated on the throne during the first burst of a revolution unparalleled in the annals of mankind: every passion was armed against him, and vied with each other in working his destruction; in himself alone he imagined he beheld all the notions and principles against which war was made: amidst this crowd of dangers he persisted in listening to no guide but the maxims of a superstitious piety; religion alone as yet triumphed, but it was at the moment when his misfortunes were left without a hope, that the power of faith fully displayed itself in the conduct of Lewis: the strength of that unshaken conviction did not permit even the shadow of weakness to be perceived in his mind, and the heroism of philosophy was compelled to bow the head before

the dignity of his simple resignation. He submitted with calm unconcern to all the decrees of fate, without, however, betraying any thing like insensibility for the objects of his affection; on the contrary, all the faculties of his life seemed revived and re-invigorated at the moment of his death. Without a groan, or even a sigh, he retraced back all the steps that led him from the throne to the scaffold, and the awful instant when these sublime words, '*Son of St. Lewis, ascend into heaven,*' were addressed to his ears, such were the raptures of religion with which his soul was swelled, that it is but fair to suppose that even this his last moment was not influenced by the terrors of death.

Candour, I trust, will not permit me to be accused of giving but a faint colouring of the influence of religion: I am far, nevertheless, from thinking that, independent of the inutility of the endeavour, which, in this respect, we might make within ourselves, the being thus absorbed in faith, should be ranked among the means which conduce to the happiness of mankind; it is foreign, moreover, to my subject, in this first part of my work, to consider religion in its political relations, that is, in the advantages that may result from it towards the stabi-

lity and the happiness of the social state, it being here simply my intention to touch upon it as far only as it may affect the happiness of individuals.

And, in the first place, that disposition to which the mind must be moulded in order to admit the dogmas of certain religions, is felt not unfrequently to awaken a secret and painful sensation in the breast of him, who, gifted with an enlightened understanding, deems it, however, his duty to employ it only on certain conditions; but impressed occasionally, and at intervals, with doubts respecting every thing that is contrary to reason, he cannot help feeling scruples about his doubts, or a regret at having so far delivered up his life to uncertainties, that he must either acknowledge to himself the inutility of his past existence, or still continue to sacrifice the remainder. The heart becomes as contracted as the mind, from devotion, properly so called, which is a sort of extravagance of the mind that discovers itself under various hues.

When devotion owes its origin to misfortune, when excess of suffering sinks the soul into a state of faintness that disables it from

raising itself by its own unassisted strength; sensibility prevails on us to admit what tends to the extinction of sensibility; or, at least, what prohibits from loving with the unchecked fervency of the whole soul. We solicit to be forbid what it was not in our power to avoid.

Reason thus enters into an unequal contest with the *impassioned* affections, something enthusiastic like *passion,* some sort of thoughts, which, like passion, influence and prevail on the imagination, afford some relief to those minds that have not sufficient strength to support what ingredients of passion enter into the composition of their character. This kind of devotion is always redolent of its origin; and it is evident, as Fontenelle will have it, *que l'amour a passe par la,* that love has been there. And, indeed, it is nothing else than still continuing to love under a different form. All these devices to palliate or diminish suffering ought neither to incur censure, nor be erected into a general rule; but that extravagant, high-flying devotion which forms a part of a man's character, instead of affording him a resource, is widely different in its effects upon mankind from that which is considered as the end to which every thing tends, and as what constitutes the basis of life.

It is its almost invariable tendency to extinguish our natural good qualities; whatever they possess of spontaneous and involuntary, is incompatible with fixed established rules upon every object. Under the influence of this devotion, a man may be virtuous, without the prompting impulse of native goodness; there may even occur circumstances in which the severity of certain principles forbids us to yield to this prompting impulse. Characters, unendued with natural good qualities, may, under the shelter of what is called devotion, feel themselves more at their ease to indulge in certain failings that violate none of the laws, of which they have formed for themselves a code. Beyond what is commanded, any omission of performance is lawful. Justice dispenses with beneficence, beneficence with generosity; and if they but pay up the balance of their duties, they rest satisfied: there are, however, circumstances in life where such or such a virtue is clearly commanded, and where it requires a real sacrifice to be made. But there are kindnesses, there are services, there are condescensions, which belong to almost every instant of life, which never can be obtained at the hands of those who square every thing by the rule of duty, and who obey nothing but where obedience is enforced. Natural good qualities, that are developed by principles and called forth by

sentiments of morality, are of a much higher and more refined nature than the virtues of devotion. He who never feels it necessary to enquire into what duty prescribes, because he can trust to his own internal suggestions, and whom one might suppose to be a less rational being, so thoroughly does he act from his own spontaneous impulse, or, as it were, in mere obedience to his nature: he who practises every genuine virtue, without previously imposing that practice upon himself, and who values himself the less, because, as his conduct never requires the exertion of an effort or struggle, he, therefore, never swells with the consciousness of a triumph; he indeed may be pronounced a truly virtuous man. According to an expression of Dryden, differently applied, devotion may be said to raise a mortal to the skies, but natural morality draws down an angel upon earth:

> He rais'd a mortal to the skies,
> She drew an angel down.

While we acknowledge the advantage thus enjoyed by characters that lean to virtue from their own natural unprompted inclinations, it may also be imagined, that as devotion produces a general and positive effect, it must afford more certain and more uniform results in the general association of mankind; but it is

still, however, attended with great inconveniences where the disposition is what we call *impassioned*; and even were it attended with none, there would, notwithstanding, be more propriety, as I have already observed, in classing it among fortunate contingencies than in the rank of efficacious counsels.

It might be necessary to repeat, that I do not comprise in this investigation those religious ideas of an higher order, which ennoble the end without influencing the details of life, and which give to sentiment and to thought certain moments of repose in the vast abyss of infinity. There is now merely question of those ruling dogmas which arm religion with a much more powerful influence over mortal life, by realizing what remained afloat in the unsubstantial void of the mind, and by checking the flights of imagination by the terrors of incomprehensibility.

Ardent minds are but too prone to imagine that the exercise of judgment is of no avail, and that nothing suits their temper better than a kind of suicide of reason, by which it abdicates its own power by its own last act, and declares itself incompetent to think: as if there existed in reason something superior to itself, which was to decide that man would be more surely

guided by another of his own faculties. Ardent minds are naturally satiated with what is; and when once they bring themselves to admit what is supernatural, there are no longer any bounds to limit this creative pruriency, but such as can check the vagaries of imagination; for it then wings its wildest flights; and, satisfied with nothing but extremes, it spurns the idea of every thing that is subject to modifications.

The affections of the heart, which are inseparable from truth, are necessarily distorted from their nature by errors of whatever kind. Nor is it the mind alone that errs; for though there remain in the heart certain virtuous emotions which error cannot suppress, it must, however, be allowed that inasmuch as sentiment depends upon reflection, it may be misled by every kind of extravagance, but more particularly by that of devotion, which concenters every thing within itself alone, and subjects even goodness to certain principles, by which its exercise is considerably restrained.

I might now relinquish these ideal distinctions, these shades of discrimination in sentiment and passion, and proceed to mention the examples that still remain of intolerant superstition, of *pietism*, of *illumination*, and of all

those miserable effects which arise from the vacuities in our existence; from the struggle of man against time, and from the insufficiency of mortal life to content us; but it is the province of the moralist simply to mark out the path that leads to the extreme of error. Every one is struck with the inconveniencies of excess; and as no one can persuade himself that he will be guilty of it, when we see these ill effects described in moral works, we invariably look upon the picture as wholly foreign to ourselves.

In whatever point of view I have surveyed it, I think I have been right in not admitting religion into the class of the resources which we derive from ourselves, because it is absolutely independent of our will, and because it subjects us to the dominion of our own imagination, and to that of all those to whose holy and aweful authority we are taught to bow.

Anxious to continue consistent with the system upon which this work is grounded, with the system that holds the absolute freedom of the moral agent to be his chief good, I thought it incumbent on me to prefer, and to particularize, as the best and surest preservative against misfortune, those various means, the efficacy of which I am now about to unfold.

SECTION THE THIRD.

OF THE RESOURCES WHICH WE POSSESS WITHIN OURSELVES.

CHAP. I.

WE DO NOT STAND IN SUFFICIENT DREAD OF MISFORTUNE BEFORE IT BEFALLS US.

THERE is nothing which so little resembles the resources which we possess within ourselves, such, at least, as I understand them, as selfishness. Selfishness constitutes a character which it is impossible either to amend by advice, or otherwise to eradicate. It is an affection, whose object, by being never absent or faithless, may so far be productive of some enjoyments; but it is also accompanied with deep-felt anxieties; and like a passion that has another for its object, it absorbs our faculties, without ensuring that kind of enjoyment which is always inseparable from self-sacrifice. Self-love, moreover, whether it be considered in a good or an evil light, is a disposition of the soul wholly independent of our will; to be influenced by it re-

quires no effort on our part: we are, on the contrary, impelled towards it. Wisdom may be acquired, because it results from a number of self-sacrifices: but to say that we can give ourselves a taste for a thing, or instil into ourselves any particular inclination, are expressions that involve contradiction. In a word, impassioned characters are never susceptible of what is called selfishness: they impetuously rush forward, it is true, towards their own happiness; but it is never within themselves that they seek it: they, on the contrary, expose themselves in order to procure it; nor are they ever actuated by that prudent and sensual self-satisfaction which quiets and composes the soul, but never agitates or awakens it. But as the present work is devoted to the study and delineation of *impassioned* characters, whatever does not coincide with that subject, must be deemed foreign to its purport.

There is no question of the resources which we may discover within ourselves after the storm of the more vehement passions is blown over, resources of which we would be more eager to avail ourselves, were we early impressed with the notions I have endeavoured to unfold in my analysis of the affections of the soul. Doubtless, if despair was always to re-

solve upon suicide, the course of man's life would then be fixed, and might therefore be more boldly systematized. He might then, without fear, run every possible hazard in the pursuit of what he deems perfect happiness: but the man who can brave misfortune has never laboured beneath its pressure.

This dreadful word, misfortune, is listened to in the earlier days of youth, without the mind being able to comprehend it. Tragedies, and other works of imagination, represent adversity to us as a picture where beauty and courage display their powers; but death, or some fortunate sacrifice, speedily relieves us from the anxiety we experience. In our tenderer youth, the image of grief is inseparable from a kind of sympathizing sensibility, which mingles a charm with every impression that we feel: but it is too frequently enough to have attained our twenty-fifth year, in order to have entered that period of misfortune which is traced in the career of all the passions.

It is then that the duration of misfortune is as long as that of life, it is then that it arises out of our defects, and out of the nature of the situation that has fallen to our lot; it is then that it humbles our pride, and frets our sensi-

bility. The behaviour towards us of indifferent persons, nay of our most intimate acquaintances, daily holds up to us the mirror of our misfortunes; scarcely a minute passes but some word, some gesture, even the most simple expressions remind us of what we already know, but which, nevertheless, strikes us as if it were unexpected: if we form any projects, they always turn upon our predominant suffering; the pain which this occasions, we find every where; it seems to frustrate and render impracticable even the very resolutions that cannot have the least relation to it. Against this pain we then direct the whole of our endeavours; nothing is so extravagant and frantic as the plans we pursue in order to subdue it; and the impracticability of them all, which reflection clearly demonstrates, becomes a new misfortune which we have inwardly to lament; we are overpowered and oppressed by this sole idea, as if we struggled under the paws of some huge, enormous monster. We constrain our thoughts, being wholly unable to divert or beguile them; the very progress of life becomes a labour and a trouble that does not allow a single instant of repose. Night is the only thing we long and look for during the whole of the day; and to awake again is an excruciating blow that rouzes us every morning to the contemplation of our

misfortune, which every morning strikes us with the effect of surprise.

The consolations of friendship only play upon the surface; nor does the person who loves us the most sincerely, conceive the thousandth part of the thoughts that busy our mind on the subject of our distresses; they are thoughts, indeed, that have not in them sufficient reality to be embodied in expression; but whose impression is, however, sufficiently lively and acute, to corrode the inward heart, except it be that of love, and then, even while we are speaking of another, we are occupied with ourselves; nor is it easy to conceive how we can bring ourselves to detain the attention of others with the tale of our distresses; for what advantage, what consolation can there be derived from it? Grief strikes a deep root, and can be eradicated only by some singular event, or by some great effort of courage. When the pressure of misfortune has weighed upon us for a length of time, it carries with it something that dries up the heart, that jades and dispirits resolution, and makes us as wearisome to ourselves as we are importunate to others. We feel ourselves pursued and pressed upon by the consciousness of existence as by a poisoned dagger. We would gladly obtain the pause of a day, the respite of

an hour, in order to retrieve our strength, that we may again be enabled to wage the war within ourselves; but we only endeavour to rise while oppressed with a burden: we would fain combat while embarrassed by self-obstructions; nor can we discover a single resting point, upon which we might lean, in order to subdue what surrounds us. Imagination has taken possession of every thing within us: grief meets us at the turn of every reflection; while new reflections suddenly spring up, which likewise give birth to a new train of sufferings. The horizon flies before us in proportion as we advance towards it. We endeavour to wrap ourselves up in thought, in order to shut out sensations; but thought serves only to multiply them: in fine, we soon begin to persuade ourselves that our faculties are decayed; and this self-degradation benumbs the soul, without abating any thing of the energy of grief. In vain do we look for some posture of repose, we can find it in no situation: we are anxious to fly from what we feel; but the effort which this anxiety suggests only adds to our agitation. He who can suit his soul to melancholy, and placidly consign himself to grief, without, however, ceasing to take an interest in himself; such a man cannot properly be called miserable. To be really miserable, a man must be

disgusted with himself; he must feel himself oppressed by the sense of his being tied to his existence; or, as if he were composed of two, who are wearied and fatigued with one another: he must have become utterly unsusceptible of all enjoyments, of all amusements and diversions, and have his whole soul engrossed with nothing but his sorrow: it must, finally, be accompanied with something sullen and gloomy, something that dries up every source of emotion in the heart, and that leaves it open but to one impression, that agitates, corrodes, and consumes it. Suffering then becomes the centre of all his thoughts, and constitutes the sole principle of life; nor can he otherwise recognize himself but by his pains.

If words could adequately express those sensations that are so deeply inherent in the soul, that every attempt to express them must always take away from their intenseness; if we could previously conceive an adequate idea of the nature of misfortune; there would not, I believe, be found a man who would fastidiously reject a system which professed to have no other object than to avoid suffering.

Men of frigid dispositions, who are anxious to ape the appearances of passion, are often

heard dilating on the charms of grief, on the pleasures that may be derived from pain; and nothing, if duly considered, will appear more false and far-fetched than a saying that has passed for pretty, I mean the saying of the woman, who, regretting her youthful days, exclaimed, "*that indeed was an happy time, I felt so distressed!*" But such an expression would never have been vented by a heart that was truly what we call *impassioned* : they are only your lukewarm languishing dispositions, who are wholly unacquainted with real warmth, who thus incessantly hold forth on the advantages of the passions, and on the necessity of experiencing their influence. But by ardent souls they are seriously dreaded : by ardent souls every means are eagerly grasped at that can shelter them from grief. It is to those who have learnt to dread it that these last reflections are addressed, and it is especially to those who suffer that they can afford any consolation.

CHAP. II.

OF PHILOSOPHY.

PHILOSOPHY, to whose aid I deem it wise that *impassioned* souls should have recourse, is of a nature altogether sublime. But to avail himself of these aids, man must take a position above himself in order to command himself, and above others, that he may have nothing to expect from them. Weary of exerting unavailing efforts, in order to arrive at happiness, he must resolve on relinquishing that last illusion, which, while it bursts and vanishes, carries away with it every other. He must have learnt to contemplate life passively, to endure an uniform state of body, to supply and fill up every vacuity by thought, and in thought to survey the only events which neither depend upon fate or on mankind.

When once he has settled within himself that the attainment of happiness is impossible, he is then nearer in his approaches to something that resembles it, as those whose affairs are

embarrassed, can recover no peace of mind until they have confessed to themselves that they are ruined. When once he has resolved upon the sacrifice of his hopes, every thing that tends to revive and inspirit them is an unexpected benefit, the possession of which was preceded by no kind of fear.

There are a multitude of partial enjoyments which do not flow from the same source, but which hold out to man scattered, unconnected pleasures, which a soul at peace with passion may be disposed to taste; but a vehement passion, on the contrary, absorbs them all, nor does it so much as permit the heart to be conscious of their existence.

There is no longer a flower to be discovered in the parterre which a beloved object has passed through, her lover can scarcely perceive in it the traces of her footsteps. When the ambitious survey these peaceful hamlets, over which nature has showered her choicest gifts, it only occurs to their mind to ask whether the governor of the district enjoys much consideration and power, and whether the peasants that inhabit it have the privilege of electing a deputy. To the eye of the *impassioned* man, external objects call up but one idea, because they sur-

veyed and judged of but by one and the same sentiment; but the philosopher, by the superior energies of his courage, rescues his thoughts from the yoke of passion, whereby he no longer directs them all to one single object, but is enabled to enjoy the mild impressions which each of his ideas may alternately and separately afford him.

There is nothing which may so powerfully conduce to make us regard life only as a journey, as the consideration that it discovers nothing which seems to mark and ordain it for a place of rest. Are you inclined to submit your existence to the absolute dominion of some one idea, or of some one sentiment? then every step you make is obstructed by some obstacle, or conducts to some misfortune. Are you disposed to permit your life to sail on at the caprice of the breeze, that gently wafts over a variety of situations? Are you anxious to procure for each day a certain portion of pleasure, without intending it should contribute to the mass of happiness that is to compose the whole of your destiny? This object you may easily attain; and when none of the events of life has been either preceded or followed by vehement desires, or by bitter regrets, then a sufficient share of happiness may be found in the isolated enjoyments

which are daily dispensed by the heedless hand of Chance.

If the life of man were to consist of but one period or æra, that of youth, then perhaps it might be permitted to run all the chances of the greater passions. But as soon as the winter of old age approaches, it points out and requires a new mode of existence, and this transition the philosopher only can endure with unconcern and without pain. If our faculties, if our desires, which originate from our faculties, were to run in uniform accord with the tenor of our destiny, we might indeed, at all periods of life, enjoy some portion of happiness; but the same blow does not strike at once our faculties and our desires. The lapse of time frequently impairs our lot without having enfeebled our faculties; and, on the contrary, enfeebles our faculties without having extinguished our desires. The activity of the soul survives the means of exercising it; our desires survive the loss of those pleasures to the enjoyment of which they were wont to impel us. The terrors and pangs of dissolution press home upon us, amidst the full consciousness of existence. We are, as it were, called upon to assist at our own funeral; and while we continue to hang with all the vehemence of grief on this mournful spectacle,

we renew, within our own breast, the Mezentian punishment; we tie death and life together in one loathsome embrace.

When philosophy assumes the dominion of the soul, its first act is, undoubtedly, to depreciate the value both of what we possess and of what we hope to possess. The passions, on the other hand, magnify, to a great degree, the prices of every thing: but when philosophy has once established this medium, or average of moderation, it continues through the whole of life: every moment then suffices to itself; one period of life does not encroach upon the other: nor does the hurricane of the passions disturb their regularity, nor precipitate their course: the years roll on in one tranquil flow, together with their events, and succeed each other in an undisturbed course, agreeably to the intention of nature, and give the breast of man to participate in the silent calm of universal order.

I have already observed, that he who can place suicide among the number of his resolves may fearlessly enter and run the career of the passions: to the passions he may consign his life, if he be but conscious of sufficient resolution to cut short its thread the moment that

the thunderbolt of Fate shall have blasted and destroyed the object of all his wishes and of all his cares. But as a kind of instinct, which belongs, I believe, more to our physical than to our moral nature, frequently compels us to preserve a life, every instant of which is marked and marred by misfortune, can it be conceived an easy matter to run the almost certain chance of plunging into misery that will make us execrate existence, and of a disposition of the soul that fills us with the dread of its dissolution? and this, not because, under such a situation life can still have any charms, but because we must compress into one moment's space all the incentives of our grief, in order to struggle against the ever-recurring thought of death; and because misfortune spreads itself over the whole extent of life, while the terrors that suicide inspires concentrate themselves into the space of an instant: and, in order to effect the act of self-murder, a man must take in the picture of his misfortunes, like the spectacle of his final end, aided by the intense energy of one sentiment and of one single idea.

Nothing, however, inspires more horror than the possibility of existing purely and simply; and that, for want of sufficient resolution to die. For, as it is our fate to be exposed to all the

vehement passions, such an object of dread suffices to make us cherish that power of philosophy, which supports man at the level of the events of life, without either attaching him to it too closely, or making him shrink from it with undue abhorrence.

Philosophy is not to be mistaken for insensibility, though it dulls the poignancy of piercing pains. To arrive at that philosophy, whose aids I am here extolling, requires an uncommon strength, both of soul and mind; but insensibility is a complexional habitude, not the result of a triumph. Philosophy plainly bespeaks its own origin. As it uniformly arises from depth of reflection, and as it not unfrequently is inspired by the necessity of combating with our passions, it argues the possession of superior qualities, and affords an enjoyment of one's own faculties, of which the man of insensibility is wholly unconscious: to him the intercourse of the world is better suited than to the philosopher; he is under no apprehension that the bustle and tumult of society shall disturb that peace, the sweets of which he enjoys. The philosopher, who is indebted for that peace to the meditations of thought, delights to enjoy himself in the bosom of retirement.

The satisfaction which flows from the possession of one's self, acquired by meditation, bears no resemblance to the pleasures enjoyed by the selfish man; he stands in need of others; he requires many attentions from them, and is fretfully impatient of every thing that molests him; he is wholly engrossed by his selfishness, and if that sentiment could have any energy, it would be marked with all the characteristics of a vehement passion. But the felicity which the philosopher derives from self-possession is, on the contrary, of all the sentiments that which renders a man most completely independent.

By the aid of a kind of abstraction, accompanied, however, by a real enjoyment, we raise ourselves, as it were, to some distance above ourselves, from whence we may look down and observe how we think and how we live; and as it is not the object of philosophy to controul events, we may consider them as so many modifications of our being, that exercise its faculties, and which, by a variety of ways, accelerate the progress of self-*perfectability*. It is no longer in a relation to our destiny, but in the presence of our conscience, that we place ourselves, and by renouncing all attempts at influencing the lot of mankind, we take a more vivid satisfaction

in the exercise of the power we have reserved to ourselves, that of self-dominion; and through the operation of that power we daily make some successful alteration or discovery in the only property over which we can be conscious of possessing any influence or rights.

But this is a kind of occupation that requires a state of solitude, and if it be true that solitude is a source of enjoyment to the philosopher, then the philosopher is the happy man. Not only is living solitarily the most perfect of all states, because it is the most independent, but also because the satisfaction that is to be derived from it is the very touchstone of happiness; its source is so inward and home-felt, that when we are in real possession of it, reflection draws us still nearer to the certainty of its enjoyment.

But for souls that are tossed and agitated by vehement passions, solitude is a truly perilous situation. That rest to which nature inclines us, and which seems to be the immediate destination of man, that rest, the enjoyment of which seems to have preceded even the necessity of society, and which becomes still more necessary after we have lived long in society, that very rest becomes the torment

of a man that is under the dominion of a vehement passion. And, indeed, as this calm serenity exists only around him, it forcibly contrasts with his inward agitation, and even aggravates its pain. Diversion is the method that should be first essayed, in order to mitigate the violence of a vehement passion. The struggle must not begin at close quarters; for, before an attempt has been made at living alone, we ought already to have acquired some empire over ourselves. Characters of an *impassioned* cast, far from dreading solitude, are, on the contrary, prone to court it; but this is but an additional proof that solitude foments their passion instead of extinguishing it.

The soul, annoyed by the sentiments that oppress it, imagines it may alleviate its pain by dwelling on it more intensely. The first moments that the heart gives a loose to its reveries are attended with a charming delight; but this is an enjoyment that soon exhausts and consumes. The imagination, which remains unchanged, carries to an extreme all the probabilities of unhappiness, though every thing that could enflame it had been removed. In this state of loneliness and desolation, it surrounds itself with chimeras: in silence and retirement, the imagination not being acted on by any thing

real, it gives an equal degree of importance to every thing it creates ; eager to escape from the present, it flies to the future, which is much more likely to agitate it, being better suited to its distempered habit. The ruling idea that commands it, being left unaltered by events, assumes an endless variety of forms from the busy workings of thought, the brain takes fire, and the power of reason is more than ever enfeebled. Solitude, in its ultimate effect, completely terrifies the unhappy, and makes them believe that the pain they endure is eternal. The calm and silence that surrounds them seems to insult the tumult of their soul. The dull uniformity of their days holds out no change to them even of their suffering ; the violence of such unhappiness, in the very bosom of retirement, furnishes a new proof of the fatal influence of the passions ; they make us disrelish every thing that is simple and easy, and though their source derives from the nature of man, they are continually opposing obstacles to his true destination.

For the philosopher, on the contrary, solitude is the first of blessings. For when tossed amidst the bustle of the world, his reflection, his resolution frequently deserts him, and the best es-

tablished general ideas are made to yield to particular impressions. It is then that self-government requires a more firm and steady hand. But in retirement and retreat, the philosopher holds no converse but with the rural scenes that surround him; while his soul is perfectly attuned and harmonized to the mild sensations which these scenes inspire, and from which it derives aids for thinking and for living; as it but rarely happens that we can arrive at philosophy without having made some attempts at obtaining enjoyments that are more a kin to the chimeras of youth. The mind that can bid them an eternal farewell, makes up its happiness of a kind of melancholy, that possesses more charms than is generally imagined, and towards which every thing seems to draw us back. The varying aspects of the rural scene, and all the incidents that diversify it, are so harmoniously adjusted to this moral disposition, that one might be tempted to believe that Providence intended it should become the general disposition of mankind, and that every thing concurred to inspire it, when we arrive at that period of life when the soul begins to be wearied with endeavouring to fashion its own lot, when it tires even of hope, and sighs only for the absence of pain. All nature seems to acquiesce and participate in the sentiments which men at that period

of life seem to experience; the murmurs of the wind, the roar of storms, the still serenity of a summer's evening, the hoary frosts of winter, all these movements of the elements, all these different pictures, beget similar impressions, and breathe upon the soul that mild melancholy, the most congenial sentiment of man, the natural result of his destiny, and which constitutes the only situation of the heart which leaves to meditation all its activity and all its force.

[illegible]

CHAP. III.

[illegible]

While the mind is unoccupied [illegible] a prey to the passions, [illegible] an exquisite [illegible] under the exercise of [illegible] or that [illegible] and inexplicable [illegible] of which would [illegible] its own occupation, if [illegible] all gratified, if it had been [illegible] in all its plenitude.

When the hope of making [illegible] splendid [illegible] general admiration, [illegible] the object of our [illegible] treatise on the passions should be [illegible] the history of the [illegible] which such [illegible] may exert over happiness. [illegible] in the [illegible] and the thoughts of others, [illegible] and [illegible] which [illegible]

CHAP. III.

OF STUDY.

WHEN the mind is disengaged from the dominion of the passions, it enables man to indulge in an exquisite enjoyment, I mean that of study, the exercise of thought, of that inscrutable and inexplicable faculty, the examination of which would suffice for the whole of its own occupation, if instead of being gradually unfolded, it had been bestowed upon us at once in all its plenitude.

When the hope of making some splendid discovery, or of bringing forth a work that must attract general admiration, is the scope of our endeavours and the object of our ambition, a treatise on the passions should be the place to record the history of the influence which such a disposition may exert over happiness. But there is also, in the mere pleasure of thinking and of enriching our minds with the knowledge and the thoughts of others, a kind of inward and home-felt satisfaction which equally grows out

of the necessity of being in action, and out of our desire to arrive at perfection, sentiments which are natural to man, and which tie him down to no kind of dependance.

Physical labours afford to a certain class of society, though by means altogether different, nearly similar advantages with regard to their happiness. These labours suspend the action of the soul; they beguile time; they permit us to live without suffering. Existence is a benefit which we do not cease to enjoy; but the moment which succeeds to labour, sweetens and improves the sentiment of life, while, in this succession of toil and repose, there is no room left for moral pain.

Man, whose faculties of mind must be employed, derives also from that exercise and employment the means of escaping from the torments of the heart. Mechanical occupations tranquillize thought, while they tend to extinguish it; and study, by directing the mind towards intellectual objects, in like manner diverts it from ideas that annoy. Labour, of whatsoever nature it may be, vindicates the soul from the tyranny of the passions, while their chimeras start up and infest only the leisure and the holidays of life.

Philosophy benefits us only by what it takes away: study imparts a portion of the pleasures which we endeavour to derive from the passions: it is a continual action, and man cannot withdraw himself from action, because nature imposes on him the exercise of the faculties which nature has bestowed. To genius it may be proposed to delight in its own powers and progress; to the heart, to content itself with the good it can do to others. But no kind of reflection can derive happiness from the nothingness of eternal sloth.

The love of study, far from depriving life of that interest which it is eager to inspire, carries with it, on the contrary, all the characteristics of passion, except that one only which causes all its misfortunes, namely, its dependance upon chance and upon mankind. Study holds out an object which is sure to yield in proportion to our efforts, an object towards which our progress is certain, while the road that leads to it exhibits variety without the dread of vicissitudes, and ensures success that can never be followed by a reverse. Study conducts us through a series of new objects; it supplies the place and effect of events, or furnishes such as are sufficient for thought, and which exercise and arouse it, without any application for foreign aid.

Days that are marked with a sad similarity by misfortune, or with a dull uniformity, by irksomeness, furnish the man, whose time is employed by study, with a great variety of incidents. At one time he lights on the solution of a problem, which for a length of time had puzzled his ingenuity; at another he is struck with a new beauty that shines upon him in an unknown work: in fine, his days are sweetly diversified from each other by the different pleasures, the possession of which his powers of thought have atchieved; and what gives a peculiar and marked characteristic to this kind of enjoyment is, that the consciousness of having felt it in the evening secures the repetition of it the next day. The great point to be attended to, is to give one's mind that impulsion which commands and regulates the first operations; for they bear away with them every other. Instruction begets curiosity. The mind rejects, as it were, spontaneously, what is imperfect and incomplete: it delights in a finished whole, and advances directly towards its object; and with the same spring with which it bounds towards futurity, it aspires to the knowledge of a new concatenation of thoughts, that rises before its efforts, and gratifies its hopes.

Whether it be employed in reading, or in composing, the mind performs a labour that

continually brings home to it the consciousness of the justness of its productions or the extent of its powers, and without any reflection of self-love, mingling itself with this enjoyment, it becomes as real as the pleasure derived by a robust man from bodily exercises proportioned to his strength. Rousseau, when he describes the first impressions inspired by the statue of Pigmalion, and before he supposes him to taste of the pleasure of loving, makes him experience a real enjoyment in the sensation of *self.* It is especially by the combining and developing of abstract ideas, that the mind is daily enabled to expatiate beyond the limits that yesterday confined its range, and that the consciousness of one's moral existence becomes a lively and a delightful sentiment, even though a certain degree of lassitude should succeed to this fatigue of self-exertion. The labour of study would consign us, not to the sufferings of the heart, but to pure and simple pleasures, to the sleep of thought, in a word, to rest.

The soul discovers a vast source of consolation in the study of the sciences, in the contemplation of its own ideas. The consideration of our own particular lot is swallowed up in that of the whole universe, which unveils itself to our eyes. How numberless the reflections which,

while they tend to generalize every thing, incline us to regard ourselves as one of the thousandth combinations of the universe, and by raising in our estimation the faculty of thought above that of suffering, prompt us to assign to the former the right of prescribing to the latter. Without question, the impression of pain is absolute for him who feels it; and each person endures it according to himself only: it is certain, nevertheless, that the study of history, that the knowledge of the calamities that have befallen our fellow-men before our time, delivers up the soul to a train of philosophical meditations, from which arises a melancholy that is more easily to be endured than the pain which accompanies our own misfortunes. Subjection to a common law from which no one is exempt, never gives rise to those gusts of rage which an unexampled unfortunateness would excite: for, while we reflect on the generations that have succeeded each other through a succession of sorrows and of ills, while we contemplate those worlds without number, where millions of beings are tasting, at the same time with us, either the bliss or the bitterness of existence; the intense ardour even of the individual sentiment begins to cool, and abstraction steals us from ourselves.

Whatever difference of opinion may be entertained on other subjects, no one can deny but that a belief in the immortality of the soul affords an exquisite consolation; and when we yield and permit the reins to the direction of thought, when under that direction we take a wide survey of all the most metaphysical conceptions, we perceive that it embraces the universe, and transports us beyond the boundaries of the material space we inhabit. The wonders of what is infinite appear of higher probability; every thing, except thought, loudly proclaims dissolution; existence, happiness, the passions, all depend on the three great æras of life; to be *born*, to *grow*, and to *die*. But thought, on the contrary, advances by a kind of progression, the term of which we cannot descry; and for thought, eternity is already begun. Several writers have discovered and advanced the most subtile reasonings in proof of materialism; but the moral instinct condemns that effort of ingenuity; and he who, armed with all the resources of thought, impugns the spirituality of the soul, never fails to meet with moments when even the success of his efforts begets doubts of what he endeavours to confirm. The man, therefore, who, unbiassed by any particular system, yields implicitly to his impressions, must derive from the exercise of his in-

tellectual faculties, a more lively hope of the immortality of the soul.

That undisturbed attention which study and meditation require, by diverting us from too close and anxious a pursuit of our private interests, enables us to form a clearer judgment of them. It is true, indeed, that an abstract truth brightens into greater perspicuity, the more intensely it is considered; but ordinary business, or an event that nearly concerns us, is swollen into undue magnitude, or distorted from its natural form, by being perpetually pored upon as the determination we have to take respecting these concerns, and depends upon a small number of simple and rapidly conceived ideas; whatever time is employed on them, beyond that point, is wholly engrossed by the illusions of the imagination and the heart. These illusions soon constitute a part of the object itself, and become inseparable from it, till they absorb the soul, by opening an immense and endless career to our fears and to our regrets. The wise moderation of studious philosophers depends, perhaps, as much on the small interval of time which they devote to contemplating the events of their lives, as upon the degree of courage which they evince in supporting them. This natural effect of the diversion of

mind, which arises from study, is the most efficacious aid it can furnish towards the alleviation of pain: for it would be impossible for any man to live, were he to be continually on the stretch of unremitted effort. It requires no vulgar strength of complexional disposition to enable us to resolve on the first attempts; but the success which they ensure becomes a kind of habitude that insensibly blunts the sharper sufferings of the soul.

If the fire of the passions were continually to revive from their ashes, men would be always compelled to yield to their activity; for it is impossible to wage so many conflicts, which cost the conqueror so dear. But we soon accustom ourselves to derive real enjoyments from other sources than the subjugation of the passions; and we assert our happiness both by the occupations of the mind, and by the perfect independence they bestow. To be conscious of deriving from one's self alone a distinguished destiny; to be happy, not by the indulgence of selfishness, but through the exercise of one's own faculties, places us in a situation which flatters, while it calms, the soul.

Several incidents in the lives of the ancient philosophers, of Archimedes, of Socrates, and

of Plato, have, indeed, given no small room for imagining, that study was a passion; but though the vivacity of its pleasures might betray us into this mistake, the nature of its attendant pains could not fail to correct it. The greatest chagrin that can attend the pursuits of study are the obstacles and difficulties that may retard it: but even these contribute to sharpen and improve the pleasure of success. The mere simple love of study never commits us with the will of other men: what species of pain can it, therefore, subject us to?

In this kind of taste and propensity of the mind there is nothing natural but the pleasures it affords. Hope and curiosity, the only necessary stimuli to man, are sufficiently kept alive by study, though the passions should remain dormant. The mind requires to be agitated more than the soul. It is the mind that we ought to nourish, and which we may stir up without danger. The degree of agitation it requires is altogether to be found in the occupations of study; and how high soever we may strain the sense of interest that attends it, we shall only enhance our enjoyments, without ever exciting a regret. Some of the ancients, rather enthusiasts in their idea of the enjoyments of study, endeavoured to persuade them-

selves that the bliss of Paradise consisted solely in the pleasure of exploring and discovering the wonders of the world. Indeed, he who daily grows in information, who masters, at least, the small portion of knowledge that Providence hath permitted to the mind of man, seems to anticipate the taste of those immortal delights, and already, in some measure, to spiritualize his being.

All the periods of life are equally well adapted to the enjoyment of this felicity: first, because it is sufficiently demonstrated by experience, that, by a constant exercise of the mind, we may hope to prolong the energy of its powers: and, moreover, though we should not succeed in this, we are sure that our intellectual faculties wither and decay together with the taste and relish that serve to appreciate them, without leaving in the breast of man any internal judge to mark the progress of his own decline. In the career of study, every thing tends to shield us from suffering; but we must have obtained an active mastery over our own souls, before we can prevent it from disturbing the free exercise of thought.

By a man of *impassioned* disposition, who, without having made any preliminary prepara-

tions, should take it into his head to devote himself to study, there could be reaped from it none of the advantages which I have now been describing. To him all species of instruction must appear tedious and insipid, when compared to those musings of the heart, which, by plunging and absorbing us in one predominant thought, give to long lingering hours scarcely the appearance of an instant! The folly that results from the passions does not consist in confusing all our ideas; but in fixing us permanently upon only one. There is nothing can divert the attention of a man who has submitted himself to the dominion of one particular notion: either his mind beholds no object at all, or it beholds only such as continually recall that notion. Whether he be employed in speaking or in writing on different subjects, his soul continues, during the whole of the time, to linger under the pressure of one and the same pain: the ordinary actions of life he performs as if he were in the state of a *somnambulist*; every thing that thinks, every thing that suffers within him, is tinged by one inward sentiment, the irritation of which does not admit the pause of a moment: he is soon seized with an unconquerable disrelish of every thought that is foreign to the one that engrosses his attention: his ideas do not link together, or as-

sociate in his head, nor do they imprint the slightest vestige upon his memory. To the *impassioned* and to the stupid man study causes an equal degree of irksomeness: in neither does it create any interest to win attention; for, from different causes, the ideas of others cannot meet in them with any thing like a corresponding idea. The soul, at length, wearied and fatigued, yields to the impulse that hurries it along, and consecrates its solitary hours to the thought by which it is pursued. But it soon finds reason to repent of its weakness; for the meditations of the *impassioned* man beget monsters, while those of the learned produce fair forms of wisdom. The wretch is, then, once more compelled to resort to study, in order to escape from his pain. Amidst a thousand unavailing efforts, he grasps at a moment of reflection: he prescribes to himself a certain occupation for a limited time; and this time is devoted to the impatient desire of seeing it elapsed: he frets and importunes him, not that he may live, but that he may not die; and the whole of his existence is but one restless effort to enable him to support it.

This picture is by no means intended to prove the inanity of the resources which study may supply; but it is utterly impossible for the

impassioned man to enjoy these, unless, by a long train of reflections, he prepare himself to recover his independence: while he remains a slave, it is in vain for him to attempt tasting those pleasures, the enjoyment of which can only be approached by a full and complete freedom of the soul.

Incessantly do I pore upon certain pages of a book, intitled *The Indian Hut:* never have I met with any thing so profound in the morality of feeling as the picture that is there drawn of the situation of Paria, of that man of an accursed race, forlorn and deserted by the whole universe; wandering at night amidst the silent tombs, and inspiring his fellow-beings with horror, though guiltless himself of any crime: in a word, the outcast of this world, upon which the grace of life had thrown him. There you see man exhibited in a real struggle with his own strength: no living being comes to his relief; no living being takes any interest in his existence: his sole comfort is the contemplation of Nature, and with the contemplation of Nature he is satisfied.

Such is the life which the man of feeling drags on upon this earth; he also is of a race proscribed: his voice is unheard or unheeded;

his sentiments only tend to sequester him; his desires are never accomplished; every thing around him either keeps at a distance from him, or approaches him only to molest him. O, beneficent God of Nature! raise him above the sufferings under which his fellow-men will not cease to oppress him! Enable him to avail himself of the fairest of thy gifts, the faculty of thinking; not that he may experience, but that he may form a judgment of mortal life! And if chance should happen to form an union the most fatal to human happiness, namely, the union of genius with sensibility, do not then abandon those miserable beings who are thus destined to perceive every thing, and to suffer from every thing which they perceive; uphold their reason to the pitch of their affections and their ideas, and enlighten and cheer them with the same fire which served only to consume them!

CHAP. IV.

OF BENEFICENCE.

PHILOSOPHY requires a certain energy of character: study requires something systematic in the mind; but woe to those who are unable to avail themselves of the last consolation, or rather of the sublime enjoyment which is still in the power of every man, whatever may be his cast of character, or whatever the nature of the situation in which he may be placed.

I felt it no easy sacrifice to confess, that to love passionately did not constitute real happiness: I therefore now endeavour to find out, in independent pleasures, in the resources we possess within ourselves, the most congenial situation to the fruition of sentiment. Virtue, at least in my conception of it, is nearly connected with the heart: I have called it *Beneficence*; not in the very limited sense which is generally given to the term, but to specify thereby all the actions that emanate from active goodness.

Goodness is the primitive virtue; it exists, it lives by a spontaneous movement: and as it alone is indispensably necessary to human happiness, it alone is engraven upon the heart of man; while the other duties, to the discharge of which we are unprompted by goodness, remain consigned to those codes which a diversity of country or of circumstances may modify, or recommend too late to the knowledge and attention of nations. But the good-natured man is of every age, and of every nation; his character depends not upon the degree of civilization which may prevail in the country that gave him birth; in him is exhibited moral nature in her purity, moral nature in her essence: we there behold, as it were, that prime of beauty which adorns youth, and in which every thing is graceful, though unlaboured. Goodness lives within us as the principle of life, without being the effect of our own will. It seems to be a gift of Heaven, like all our faculties: it acts unconsciously; and it is only by comparison that it learns to appreciate its own value. Until he had fallen in with a bad man, the good man could not have conceived a cast of disposition different from his own. The melancholy knowledge of the human heart, to which we are introduced by an acquaintance with the world, enables us to derive a most

lively pleasure from the practice of goodness. We set an higher value upon ourselves from seeing how few can attempt to rival us; and this reflection makes us aspire to the perfection of a virtue, to which the miseries and the guilt of the world have left so many evils to redress.

Goodness participates also in all the enjoyments of sentiment; but it differs from sentiment by that eminent characteristic, to which is invariably attached the secret of human happiness or of human misfortune. Goodness neither wishes for, nor expects any thing from others; but concentrates the whole of its felicity in the consciousness of its own feelings. It never yields, or even listens, to any one suggestion of selfishness, not so much as to the desire of inspiring a reciprocal sentiment: it enjoys nothing but what itself bestows. When this resolution is faithfully adhered to, even those, who would disturb the tranquillity of life, were we to make ourselves dependant on their gratitude, afford you, nevertheless, some transient gleams of enjoyment by the mere expression of that sentiment. The first impulses of gratitude leave nothing to be looked for; and in the emotion which accompanies them, every sort of character seems to brighten. It would appear as if the present were a certain pledge

of the future; and when the benefactor receives the promise, without being in need of its performance, the very illusion which it glances on him is innocent of all danger, and the imagination may enjoy it, as the miser enjoys the pleasures which his treasure would procure him, could he ever bring himself to lay it out.

There are virtues wholly made up of fears and of sacrifices, which, when brought to their most accomplished perfection, may afford to the energetic soul that can practise them a very high and very refined satisfaction: but, perhaps, the time may come when observation will discover that whatever is not natural is not necessary; and that morality, in different countries, is not less encumbered with superstition than religion. As far, at least, as we have happiness in view, it is impossible to suppose it to be found in a situation that calls for the exertion of continual efforts: but goodness affords such easy and such simple enjoyments, that their impression does not depend even upon the power of reflection.

If, however, a retrospective view is to be taken of one's self, then every step you go back is cheered by hope. The good one has done serves as a kind of ægis, which imagination in-

terposes between one's self and misfortune; and should we even be pursued by misfortune, we are not at a loss for an asylum wherein to take refuge: we are immediately transported in thought to the happy situation which the benefits we have conferred must ensure us.

Were it true, that, in the nature of things, there should have arisen obstacles to that perfect felicity which it may be the will of the Supreme Being to bestow upon his creatures, goodness would still continue to promote the intention of Providence; and would, if I may so speak, endeavour to second its operations.

How happy is the man who has chanced to save the life of a fellow-creature! He can no longer indulge the idea of the inutility of his existence; he can no longer feel burthensome or loathsome to himself. How far more happy still is the man who has securely established the happiness of a feeling heart! In saving the life of another we cannot ascertain the nature of the favour we bestow: but when we rescue a man from the gripe of grief or pain, when we open anew the source of his enjoyments, we may rest assured that we have acted as his benefactor.

It is not in the power of any event to abate an atom of the pleasures which active goodness has procured us. Love has often been observed to bewail his own sacrifices: ambition discovers in them the causes of his misfortunes; but goodness, by aiming at no object but the mere enjoyment of its own acts, can never be deceived in its calculations. Goodness has nothing to do either with the past or the future: a series of present moments constitutes its life; the equilibrium of its soul is so perfect and uniform that it is never violently hurried towards any particular period or any particular idea; its wishes and its efforts bear equally on every day, because they belong to a sentiment that is always the same, and which it is always easy to employ.

It is certainly by no means true, that all the passions tend to estrange us from goodness: there is one of them in particular that disposes the heart to pity for misfortune: but it is not amidst the tempests which that passion excites that the soul can develope and fully feel the influence of the beneficent virtues. The happiness which arises from the passions produces a diversion too powerful, or the misfortunes they cause engender a despair too fierce to permit a

man, under their controul, to retain the free exercise of any faculty. The sufferings of others may easily affect a heart already moved by its own particular situation; but passion continues fixed on nothing but its own object. The enjoyments which a few acts of beneficence might procure are scarcely perceived by the *impassioned* heart that performs them. Could Prometheus, while tied to his rock of torment, be sensible of the smile of returning spring or the serene effulgence of a summer's day? While the vulture sticks to the heart, while it gnaws and devours the principle of life, there is the situation that calls for perfect ease or death: no partial consolation, no random, fortuitous pleasure can be of any efficacious aid. As, however, the soul is always more capable of the sublime virtues, and of the more refined enjoyments, when it has been tempered in the furnace of the passions, and when its triumph has not been purchased without a conflict; so also even goodness does not become a living source of happiness, unless for him in whose heart has germinated the principle of the passions.

He who has felt the laceration of the tender affections, of ardent illusions, and even of wild and madding desires, is intimately acquainted with every kind of misfortune, and tastes, in

his endeavours to soothe them, a pleasure wholly unknown to that species of men, who seem to be but half-formed, and whose tranquillity is owing only to their deficiencies of perfection. He who, from his own fault, or through chance, has waded through a variety of sufferings, is eager to obviate the recurrence of those cruel scourges that continually hover over our heads; and his soul, still prone to pain, endeavours to rest on that kind of prayer which to him appears most efficacious.

Beneficence fills the heart as study occupies the mind : it is also attended with the pleasure of arriving at self-perfection, with independence upon others, and with the conscious and constant exercise of one's faculties. But that degree of sensibility which inheres in every thing that interests the soul, converts the exercise of goodness into an enjoyment, which alone can supply the vacuum which the passions leave after them. The passions cannot let themselves down to converse with objects of an inferior order; and the abyss which these volcanoes have sunk so deep, can only be filled up by active and rapturous sentiments, which transport beyond ourselves the object of our thoughts, and teach us to consider our life, not in relation to ourselves, but as it regards others.

This is the most natural resource, the most congenial gratification to *impassioned* characters that always retain some traces of the emotions they have subdued. Goodness does not, like ambition, require a return for what it performs; but it, at the same time, supplies the means of extending our existence, and of exerting an influence over the lot of many. Goodness does not, like love, make the desire of being beloved its main-spring and its hope. It moreover permits us to indulge the mild emotions of the heart, and to taste of life beyond the sphere of our own destiny. In a word, whatever is generous in the passions is also to be found in the exercise of goodness: and this exercise, though the noblest employ of the most perfect reason, is also not unfrequently the phantom of the illusions of the mind and heart.

However desolate or obscure be the situation into which chance may have thrown us, goodness can extend the effects of our existence, and bestow upon every individual one of the attributes of power, that of influencing the lot of others. The multitude of evils that may be brought upon us by the most common run of men of every character inclines us to imagine that a generous being, whatever may be his situation, might, by devoting himself solely to

the impulse of goodness, create an interest for his heart, an aim for his endeavours, and arm himself, in some measure, with a kind of government, notwithstanding the narrow limits that confine his destiny.

Behold Almont! his fortune is, indeed, limited and impaired; but never has the voice of distress implored his compassion without his having immediately discovered the means of affording relief, or, at least, of bestowing some small temporary aid, to save the person who solicits it the painful reflection of having solicited in vain. Almont cannot boast of credit or patronage: he is the object, however, of general esteem; and his courage is universally acknowledged: he never speaks but to forward the interests of another: he is never without some resource to hold out to misfortune; and he does more to relieve it than the most powerful minister; for he devotes to its relief every reflection of his mind: never has he observed a man labouring under affliction without remarking to him exactly what is proper for him to hear; without consulting his own head and heart, in order to discover the direct or the oblique consolation which conforms and is requisite to such a state of affliction; without sedulously examining what thoughts he should call up in his

mind, and which he ought to keep back: and all this without the least appearance of affectation or of labour.

This profound knowledge of the human heart, from which springs the adulation of courtiers towards their sovereign masters, is employed by Almont to assuage the sufferings of the unfortunate. The more high minded we are, the more we respect distress, and the lower we bow before it. If self love seems satisfied, Almont disregards it; but if it appears humbled, if it relents into sorrow, he raises it up, he reinstates it, and converts it into a prop and support for the man whom that very self-love had laid low. If you meet with Almont when your spirits are depressed, his kind solicitous attention to what you say convinces you that you are in a situation that creates and commands an interest; though the moment before you saw him, so dispirited were you by your distress, that you took it for granted it must prove irksome to the ears of others. It is impossible to listen to him without the tenderness with which he touches on your sorrows awakening those emotions of which your withered and exhausted soul had already become unsusceptible: in a word, you cannot converse, however slightly, with him, that he does not hold out to you en-

couragements against despondency, and new incentives to hope: he relieves your grief from its fixed uniformity, and wins your imagination to a different point of view, by exhibiting your destiny under new and unexpected colours. By the assistance of reason we may have some power over ourselves; but it is from another we must expect the consolations of hope. Almont never thinks of displaying his prudence, while its dictates cheer you with advice: he endeavours to divert, not to lead you astray: he watches the workings of your soul; but it is only to solace them: and his study of mankind has solely for its object to discover the means by which he may console them. Almont never deviates from that inflexible principle which forbids him to take any liberty that could prove detrimental to others. As we contemplate and reflect on life, we behold the greater part of mortal beings fret and fume, harass and deject themselves, either for their own interest, or merely from indifference for the image or the thought of that pain which their own hearts refuse or are undisciplined to feel. May the Almighty reward Almont! — may all that breathe adopt him as a model! He, indeed, is a man; and a man such as mankind should be proud to resemble!

Without any intention whatever to weaken the sacred tie of religion, it may fairly be asserted, that the basis of morality, considered as a principle, depends on the good or the evil which we may do to others by this or that action. On this ground is it that mankind have an interest in the sacrifices made by each individual, and that, as in the payment of duties and taxes, we regain the value of what we individually sacrifice, in the share of protection we derive from the maintenance of general order. All the real virtues take their source in goodness; and were we to form a tree of morality, in imitation of that of knowledge, it would be to this sentiment, in its most extensive acceptation, that we must ultimately trace back every thing that inspires admiration or esteem.

CONCLUSION.

I HERE close this first part: but previous to my entering on the second, it may be proper to recapitulate what I have already advanced.

What! shall I be told, you condemn all the *impassioned* affections? Sad and melancholy, indeed, is the lot which you hold out to man! No spring to move him; no interest to entice him; no ultimate object to which he may tend! But first let it be remembered that I never dreamed of drawing out the picture of happiness: none but alchymists, were they to explore the moral world, could flatter themselves with the hope of making such a discovery: my intention was solely to investigate the means of escaping from the more poignant pains. Every minute that moral pains endure fills me with fearful apprehensions, in the same manner as physical sufferings affright the generality of mankind: and could they but previously conceive an equally striking idea of the sufferings

of the soul, they would shrink with equal horror from the passions which expose them to those sufferings. Neither is it to be denied but that we may find through life an *interest*, a *spring* of action, an *object* towards which to tend, without becoming the prey of *impassioned* emotions. Every circumstance that occurs may deserve a preference over this or that other; and every preference argues a wish, an action: but the object of the desires of passion does not consist in what is, but in what passion fancies to exist: it is a species of fever, which continually presents an imaginary end that must be attained by real means, and which, by setting man perpetually at variance with the nature of things, makes that essentially necessary to his happiness which it is impossible to accomplish.

Those who extol the charm which the passions diffuse through life mistake their tastes for their passions. Our respective tastes stamp a new value upon what we possess, and upon what we are likely to obtain; but the passions grasp, with their full force and vehemence, at the objects we have lost, or at the advantages which we make but unavailing efforts to acquire. The passions are the spring and bound of man towards another destiny: they importune us with a sense of the restlessness of our faculties,

and of the vanity of human life: they presage, perhaps, a future existence; but the present they, in the mean time, vitiate and annoy.

While I described the enjoyments that arise from study and from philosophy, I by no means pretended that a solitary life was that which ought to be preferred. Solitude is necessary only to those who cannot rely on their own strength to rescue them from the dominion of the passions which assail them in the world. He surely is not unhappy, who, while he discharges some public employ, looks for no other recompence in the performance of his duty but the testimony of his own conscience: he surely is not unhappy, who, bent upon literary pursuits, thinks only of the pleasure of happily expressing his ideas, and of rendering them useful to his fellow-men: he surely is not unhappy, who, in the narrower circle of private life, rests satisfied with the heart felt enjoyment of the good he does, without exacting the return of gratitude it deserves: even in the case of sentiment itself, he who does not expect from man a faculty rather celestial than human, that of a boundless, unlimited attachment, may delight in thus devoting himself to another merely for the pleasure of this very self-devotion. In short, if in these different situations we feel conscious of

sufficient fortitude to rely upon ourselves alone, and attach ourselves to nothing but what is recognized by our own feelings, then there is no necessity of seeking the resources of mere solitude. Philosophy and its powers subsist within ourselves: but the passions are especially characterized by resting our happiness on the cooperation of others. As long as we look to others for any return whatsoever, so long is there a certainty of our unhappiness: but travelling through the various roads trodden by the pursuits of man, where the passions precipitately press forward, there may be something tasted of the delight which the passions inspire, unmingled with any of the bitterness they infuse, if we but assert a certain empire over the vicissitudes of life, without letting ourselves be hurried away by its stream; but more especially if what constitutes self is not permitted to depend either upon a tyrant within ourselves, or on subjects from without.

Children and wise men resemble each other in many striking particulars; and the great master-work of reason is to lead us back to what nature suggests. Children taste of life, as it were, drop by drop: they never link together the three periods that compose its span. For them desire, indeed, connects together to-day

and to-morrow; but the present is never vitiated by the anguish of expectation: each hour, in their little life, asserts its due portion of enjoyment; every hour has attached to it its own peculiar lot, independent upon the hour that preceded or the hour that follows it. The pleasures they enjoyed are not, however, enfeebled by this subdivision; they spring up anew every moment, because passion has not destroyed in them either the germs of the lighter thoughts or the shades of the *impassioned* sentiments: in a word, what is not passion in itself or what passion does not extinguish. Philosophy, it must be owned, cannot recreate the mind with the fresh and bloomy impressions of childhood, nor lull us in its happy ignorance of that career which terminates in death: this, notwithstanding, is the model upon which we ought to build the science of moral happiness: we must sail down the stream of life, our eyes intent upon the shore, rather than on the term where the voyage is to end. Children, when left to themselves, are the freest of all beings; they are loosed by happiness from every constraint. Philosophers ought to be directed to the same result by the dread of unhappiness.

The passions assume the aspect of independence, while, in reality, there is no more gal-

ling and oppressive yoke: they are continually at variance or in a conflict with every thing that exists: they trample down the barrier of morality; that barrier which, instead of narrowing, secures them a due space; the consequence of which is, that they afterwards spend their violence against obstacles that are continually starting up, till they finally deprive man of all power over himself. From the passion for glory, which burns for the according, united suffrage of the world, down to that of love, which requires only the attachment and possession of one object, the influence of mankind over us is the only ratio upon which we ought to calculate the degrees of unhappiness; and, indeed, the only true system that can enable us to escape from pain is that which teaches us to shape and square our life, not upon what we may expect from others, but only upon what we can do for ourselves. Our mode of existence should start from, not return to ourselves; and without ever being the center, we should always be the impulsive power of our own destiny.

The science of moral happinesss, that is to say, of the less degree of misery, might become as positive as that of every other science: it requires only to find out what is best for the

greatest number of men in the greatest number of situations. But the application of this science to this or that particular character is what must always remain problematical. By what chain, in this kind of code, can we link the minority, or even a single individual, to the general rule? and even he who cannot submit to it would equally claim the attention of the philosopher. The legislator takes mankind in the bulk; the moralist takes them one by one: the legislator must attend to the nature of things; the moralist to the diversity of sensations: the legislator, in fine, ought to consider mankind in the light of their mutual relations to each other; and the moralist, while he considers each individual as a complete moral whole, as a compound of pleasure and of pain, of passion and of reason, should always contemplate man in his habitudes with himself.

But there remains to be made one reflection more, and that the most important of all, namely, to consider to what extent it is possible for *impassioned* souls to adopt the system I have just laid down.

The first step towards this consideration is to observe how far events, in themselves apparently similar, may differ according to the

natural disposition of those whom they affect. It were wrong to insist so much on the internal power of man, were it not by the nature, and even by the degree of this power, that we are to form any judgment of the intenseness of the sufferings of life. One man is wafted into port by the gentle agitation of his natural propensities, while another is carried in only by the tumultuous billows of the tempest. And while every thing in the physical world may be submitted to a previous calculation, the sensations of the soul are liable to vary according to the nature of their object and the moral organization of the person upon whose breast they are impressed.

The opinions which we form respecting happiness are, then, only just when they are founded upon as many particular notions as there are individuals whose lot we may be desirous to ascertain. In the most obscure and lowly situations of life we may witness conflicts and victories which evince a strength and a struggle beyond any thing which the page of history has immortalized. We must attend, in the appreciation of each individual character, to the sufferings that arise from the contrasts of happiness and misfortune, of glory and of humiliation, which the lot of one man may

exemplify. Human defects must be classed among human misfortunes; the passions among the buffets of fate: and the more certain characters are marked with singularity, the more they claim the attention and should exercise the judgment of the philosopher. Moralists should look upon themselves as resembling that religious order that was stationed on Mount St. Bernard; they should devote themselves to recalling and setting right the travellers who go astray.

Excluding every thing foreign to the situation of the sufferer, even the word *pardon*, which destroys that mild equality that should subsist between the consoler and the consoled, our attention should be fixed, not on the errors we might blame, but on the pain we should alleviate. It is, therefore, in the name and in the behalf of happiness alone that I have combatted the passions.

Viewing, as I have already observed, guilt and the effects of guilt as a scourge of nature, which so thoroughly depraved and vilified man, that it is no longer by the precepts of philosophy, but by the strong curbing hand of the laws, that he is to be checked, I have examined, in my investigation of the passions, nothing but

their influence over the very person whom they controul. In their moral or political relations there will occur a number of distinctions to be made between the base and the generous, the social and the anti-social passions: but upon a survey merely of the sufferings they occasion, they will almost all be found to prove adverse or fatal to human happiness.

To him who is over ready to complain of his lot, who imagines he discovers in it a degree of misfortune hitherto unexampled, and whose sole study is to struggle against events; to him I say, "Take a survey, together with me, of all the various vicissitudes of the human passions, and you will see that it is from their very essence, and not from any unexpected stroke of fate, that your sufferings take their rise. If there exists in the order of things possible a situation that can shield you from them, I will seek for it in concert with you, I will earnestly co-operate in endeavouring to secure it to you." But the grand argument that may be urged against the passions is, that their prosperity, perhaps, is still more fatal to happiness than even their adversity. If you are thwarted in your projects of the acquisition or the conservation of glory, your mind may fasten upon the event that, on a sudden, has arrested your ca-

reer; it may even dwell and feed upon illusions, which arise still more easily out of the past than from the future. If the object that is dear to your heart has been torn from you by the stern command of those upon whose caprice or authority she depends, you may for ever remain ignorant of what your own heart might have endured, should your love, as it languished and went out in your soul, make you experience the bitterest of all worldly sufferings, the withering and aridity of one's own sensations; there may still, however, remain a soft, a tender recollection, the sole enjoyment of three-fourths of our mortal life. Nor is this all: I am moreover bold to say, that if it be through real faults, the regret for which incessantly corrodes your mind, that you imagine yourself to have missed the object after which your passion hurried, still your life is less a void, your imagination has something left upon which to fasten, and your soul is less dispirited and depressed than if, without the intervention of disastrous events, of unsurmountable obstacles, or of improper and imprudent conduct, passion alone, merely by the operation of passion, had, at the close of a certain period of time, discoloured the complexion of your life, after having fallen upon a heart that would not have been able to endure it. What then is the na-

ture of a destiny that carries with it either an impossibility of arriving at one's object or an inability to enjoy it if attained?

Far, however, be it from me to adopt those pitiless maxims of frigid souls and ordinary understandings, *that we can always subdue ourselves; that we can always preserve a dominion over ourselves:* and who, then, that has formed an idea, not only of passion, but even of a degree of passion beyond that which he may not have experienced, can take upon him to say, there finishes moral nature? Newton would not have attempted to trace the limits of thought, yet the first pedant you meet with will endeavour to circumscribe the empire of the soul's emotions: he sees that they produce death; and yet he fancies that by listening to him one might be saved. It is not by assuring men that they all may triumph over their passions that you render the victory more easy and secure; it is by fixing their attention on the cause of their unhappiness; it is by analysing the resources which reason and sensibility may furnish, that you supply them with surer, because with truer, means. When the picture of pain and suffering is strikingly drawn, what lessons can be taught that can add to the force and urgency of your desire of ceasing to suffer? All that

can be done for a man smarting under misfortune is to attempt convincing him that he should breathe a milder air in the asylum to which you invite him: but if his feet are tied down to the fiery soil which he inhabits, shall he appear to you less worthy of compassion?

I shall have accomplished my object if I have succeeded in calming the agitated soul with the prospect of returning repose; but more especially, if, by disavowing none of its pains, but by acknowledging the dreadful power of the sentiments that tyrannize over it, I have hit on the secret of speaking its own language, and consequently obtain a patient hearing. Passion spurns and rejects all advice that does not suppose the painful knowledge of its own influence; and it is prone to look down upon you as partaking of another nature; nor is it to be wondered at: to the tone, however, of my voice it cannot be a stranger; and on this motive alone do I build my hopes, that amidst the multitude of books on morality that surround us, even this may still prove of some little utility.

Sorely, however, should I repent having undertaken it, if, by foundering, like so many others, against the terrible force of the passions,

it served only to confirm the belief of frigid souls, in the facility we should experience in surmounting the sentiments that disturb and vitiate the comforts of life. No: do not condemn those unfortunate beings who cannot cease to be unfortunate: aid and solace them, ye upon whom their destiny depends; but aid and solace them in the manner they wish to be solaced. He who can sooth misfortune ought never to think of chiding or directing it: for general ideas are insupportable to him who suffers, if it be another, and not himself, who applies them to his particular situation.

In my endeavour to compose this work, in which I describe the passions as destructive of human happiness, and in which I fancied I pointed out resources for life, independent of their impulsion, it is upon my own mind also that I am desirous to impress conviction. My object in writing was to discover myself anew amidst the crowd of sufferings that surround me; to rescue my faculties from the servitude imposed on them by sentiment; to raise myself, by a kind of abstraction, to a point that might enable me to observe the operation of pain on my own mind; to examine, in my own impressions, the various movements of moral nature; and to generalize the little ex-

perience which I may have acquired by reflection. An absolute diversion of the mind being impossible, I tried if mere meditation on the objects that enchain our attention might not lead us to the same result; and if, by drawing near the phantom, we did not make it vanish sooner than by retreating from it. I have endeavoured to try if what is most poignant in personal pain might not have its edge somewhat blunted, by placing ourselves as a component part in the vast mass of human destinies, where man is lost in the age he lives in, the age is lost in time, and time in what is incomprehensible. This I have tried; but I am not sure that I have succeeded in the first experiment of my doctrine upon myself: would it, therefore, be becoming in me to assert its absolute power? Alas! while reflection draws near to examine the ingredients that compose the character of man, we lose ourselves in the wilderness of melancholy.

Political institutions and civil relations may furnish us with means almost certain of producing public happiness or public calamity; but to fathom the depths of the soul, how arduous and difficult the task! At one time superstition forbids us to think or feel: it deranges the whole system of our ideas; it gives a direction to our move-

ments in an inverse sense of their natural impulsion; it makes you cling even to your misfortune, if it be occasioned by some sacrifice, or may become the object of one. At another time the heedless and headlong ardour of passion will not endure any thing like an obstacle, nor consent to the smallest privation: it rejects or contemns every thing that is future, and fastening upon every instant as if it were to be the last, it awakes to sense only when arrived at its end, or when engulphed in the bottom of the abyss. How inexplicable is the phænomenon of the spiritual existence of man, which, when compared with matter, all whose attributes are settled and complete, seems still to be only at the eve of its creation, and amidst the chaos that goes before it!

The only sentiment that can serve as a guide to us in all situations, and that may be applicable to all circumstances, is pity. With the help of what more efficacious disposition could we either endure others or ourselves? An observing mind, a mind of sufficient strength to be its own judge, discovers in itself the source of all its errors. Man is entire and complete in each individual man: but in what mazes has not frequently the thought, which precedes actions, bewildered itself; or if not thought, at least

something still more fugitive! This inward secret, which cannot be manifested by words, without giving it an existence that does not belong to it; this inward secret, I say, must contribute to render the sentiment of pity an inexhaustible resource.*

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* Smith, in his excellent work, "*The Theory of Moral Sentiments*," makes pity consist in that sympathy which places us in the situation of another, and renders us sensible to all the feelings which such a situation may impress. That most undoubtedly is one of the causes of pity; but there is this inconvenience in that definition, which, indeed, attends almost every other; it narrows the thought to which the word to be defined gave rise: that word was clothed with a number of accessory ideas, and of impressions wholly peculiar to each individual that heard it; and you restrict its signification by attempting an analysis, which always proves incomplete when a sentiment is the object to be defined; for a sentiment is a compound of sensations and of thoughts which you can never cause to be understood, without the united help of judgment and emotion. Pity is frequently abstracted from all reflection on one's self. If, by the help of abstraction, you should figure to yourself a kind of pain which required, in order to be endured, an organization wholly different from your own, you still would feel pity for that painful situation. Indeed, the most opposite dispositions must necessarily be impressed with pity at sufferings which they themselves could never have experienced. In a word, the spectacle of misfortune must move and melt mankind by means of commotion, or, as it were, by a talisman, and not by examination or combination.

But we are told, that by indulging the suggestions of pity, both individuals and governments may be guilty of injustice. It may first, however, be observed, that individuals, in their private capacity, are scarcely ever exposed to a situation which commands resistance to the impulse of good-nature; their relations respecting others are so limited and circumscribed, and the events which furnish an opportunity of doing any good, hang upon such a small number of chances, that, by acting over nicely and fastidiously on the occasions that may be thus improved, we consign and condemn our life to dull and barren insensibility.

There is scarcely, I believe, any more important deliberation in which the mind can be involved than that which might lead us to hold it a duty to cause distress, or to refuse a service which it was in our power to perform: so strongly must be present to our thoughts the whole chain of moral ideas, the whole picture of the fate of man: so certain, moreover, must we be to discover good in what is evil, or evil in what is good. No: far from chiding, in that respect, the imprudent propensities of mankind, we should, on the contrary, wean their attention from an over nice calculation of the inconveniencies that may arise from the in-

dulgence of generous sentiments, and dissuade them from thus claiming to themselves the privilege of a judgment which God alone has a right to pronounce: for to the hands of Providence only should be entrusted that great and awful balance, in which are to be weighed the relative effects of happiness and of misery. Man, who can only catch at fugitive moments, at accidental occasions, should rarely forego doing all the partial good which chance may enable him to diffuse.

It happens but too frequently that legislators themselves are led to square their conduct upon general ideas. The grand principle, that the interest of the minority should always yield to that of the majority, depends entirely on the sort of sacrifices that may be exacted from the minority; for pushing them to extremities would be nothing less than adopting and practising the system of Robespierre. Nor is it the number of individuals, but the degree of suffering that we ought to take into account: for could we even suppose the possibility of making an innocent person suffer for a number of ages, it were atrocious to require it, were it even requisite for the safety of a whole nation. But these frightful alternatives never exist in real life.

Truths of a certain class are both dictated by reason and suggested by the heart; and it is almost always the interest of wise policy to listen to the voice of pity: between pity and the extreme of cruelty there is no medium; and Machiavel, even in the code of tyranny, has confessed, *that we should know how to gain over those whom it was not in our power to cut off.*

Men do not long yield obedience to laws that are too severe; and the state that enacts, without being able to enforce them, exposes itself to all the inconveniencies both of rigour and of weakness. Nothing so effectually fritters down the strength of a government as a disproportion between delinquencies and punishments. Government is then viewed in the odious light of an enemy, while it ought only to appear as the head and regulating principle of the empire. Instead of blending itself in your mind with the nature and necessity of things, you behold it only as an obstacle which you must struggle against and surmount. The agitating turbulence of some, and the hope, however mad, which they conceive of being able to overturn what oppresses them, shake the confidence even of those who are most zealous in support of the government.

In fine, in whatever point of view we contemplate the sentiment of pity, it will be found wonderfully fertile in the production of beneficial consequences both to individuals and to nations: nor shall we feel reluctant to persuade ourselves that it is the only primitive idea that is implanted in the nature of man; for it is the only one that is necessary to the culture of every virtue and to the enjoyment of every blessing.

Can there be a finer final cause in the moral order of the world, than the prodigious influence which pity exercises over every heart? It seems as if our very physical organization was intended to receive its soft impression. A voice that begins to faulter, a countenance that is suddenly changed, operate directly upon the soul like our sensations: thought does not intervene between them; nor is there any thing intellectual in the impression; but it is a disposition of the soul of man that has something in it still more sublime, in as much as it peculiarly devotes itself to the protection of weakness. While every thing else seems to incline in favour of strength, this sentiment alone re-establishes the balance by calling up the aid of generosity. This sentiment is more deeply affected at the sight of a defenceless object, at

the appearance of desolate distress, at the shriek of terror and of pain: it alone protects the vanquished after victory; it alone redresses the ill effects of that base propensity in mankind to deliver up their attachments, their faculties, their very reason itself, to the capricious decision of success. Indeed, this sympathy for distress is an affection so powerful; it so strongly unites and compresses the whole force of our physical and moral impressions, that an attempt to resist its influence argues a degree of depravity, from which we ought to turn with horror and execration.

Those beings only have no claim to the reciprocal association of misery and indulgence, who, by extinguishing within themselves the impulse of pity, obliterate from their heart the seal of human nature. The remorse we feel for having violated any principle whatever of morality is, like morality itself, the work and effect of reasoning; but the remorse that stings us for having stifled the voice of pity, pursues and persecutes us like an inborn sentiment: it is a danger that threatens *self*; it is a terror of which we ourselves are the object. So thoroughly are we identified with a being who suffers, that those who can prevail upon themselves to destroy that identity, are very frequently hardened into

an obduracy towards themselves, which, in many respects, contributes to deprive them of every thing which they might otherwise expect from the pity of others. Such, however, let me conjure, if yet it be not too late, that they endeavour to save some miserable wretch; that they relent and pardon an enemy whom they have conquered: that thus, by returning within the pale of humanity, they may still again be taken under its sacred protection.

It is during the crisis of a revolution that our ears are incessantly compelled to hear that pity is a puerile sentiment; that it impedes every necessary action, and obstructs the general interest; and that it ought consequently to be banished, together with those effeminate affections which let down the dignity of statesmen and unnerve the vigour of party leaders. The contrary, however, is the truth: it is amidst the disorder of a revolution that pity, which, under every other circumstance, is an involuntary emotion, ought to become the rule and guide of our conduct. Then every restraining tie is dissolved: party-interest succeeds, and becomes for every one the chief, the only end; but this end being supposed to contain both true virtue and the only general happiness, assumes for a time the place of every other kind of law; except

at a time when passion intermingles with reason, and then there is only one sensation, that is, something which partakes a little of the nature of passion itself, that can possibly be opposed to it with success. When justice is disregarded, pity may be of no avail: but a revolution, whatever may be its object, suspends the social state; and we must return to the source of all laws at a moment when every thing that is called legal power is no longer but a vague unideal sound. Party leaders may feel sufficient self-confidence to enable them to act on all occasions conformably to the strictest justice: but there is nothing can prove more fatal to them than the instigations of followers who are deaf to pity, and who are thereby incapable of all enthusiastic feeling for others. Both these sentiments are closely allied, though by different relations, to the faculty of imagination. Rage and revenge are doubtless closely connected with enthusiasm: but those turbulent movements, which prompt us to be cruel for a moment, bear no analogy whatever with what we have lately witnessed;—a continued, and consequently a cold-blooded system of stifling all pity. But when once this horrid system takes hold of the minds of soldiers, they just judge of their generals as they do of their enemies; they calmly conduct to the scaffold

those whom but the evening before they most passionately esteemed; they are wholly at the mercy of a kind of reasoning power, which consequently depends on a certain arrangement of words, and acts in their heads like a principle and its consequences. The multitude can never be governed but through the medium of their sensations: woe, therefore, be to the leaders, who, by stifling in their partizans every thing that is human, every thing that is stirred up by the imagination or sentiment, convert them into reasoning murderers; who march to the perpetration of crimes under the conduct of metaphysics, and will immolate them to the first arrangement of syllables which in their mind may appear conviction.

Cromwell restrained the people by the terrors of superstition; the Romans were tied down by the sanctity of an oath; the Greeks were won and led away by an enthusiastic admiration of their great men. If that kind of national sentiment, which in France made generosity a point of honour, and compassion for the conquered a characteristic trait; if that kind of national sentiment do not resume something of its former mild dominion, never shall the government acquire a settled and unresisted empire over a nation that has nothing of a moral

instinct by which it may be united and impelled: for what is there which more than reasoning tends to divide and disunite?

In fine, it is pity also which alone can enable us to put an end to intestine war. Inexhaustible are the resources of desperation: nor can the most dextrous negociations, or the most blood-stained victories, have any other effect than to envenom animosities and exasperate revenge. Nothing but a generous burst of the heart, proceeding from enthusiasm and from pity, can stop the progress of intestine broils, and resound the word *country* with equal force in the ear of all the parties by which it is now so miserably torn. This commotion of the soul produces more real effects in one day than all the writings and combinations which political ingenuity can devise; and man is only rebelling against his nature when he endeavours to entrust to mind alone a preponderating influence over the human destiny.

But to you, Frenchmen! must I now appeal; to you, invincible warriors; to you, their renowned leaders; you, whose prudence has directed, and whose courage has inspired them; to the united efforts of you all is France indebted for the glory of her victories; for the

splendour of her triumphs: but to you also does it belong to proclaim the will and complete the work of generosity: unless you cultivate and practise that virtue, where are the laurels that now remain to be gathered? Your enemies are vanquished: they no longer oppose resistance; they can no longer minister to your glory by their defeats: would you still continue to astonish us? Pardon, for you are conquerors. Terror or enthusiasm has prostrated at your feet more than one half of the globe: but what have you yet done for the relief of misery? What is man, if he has not exerted himself to comfort his fellow-men; if he has not combatted the power of evil, and driven it from the earth? The generality of governments are vindictive, because they are under the influence of fear, and because they do not dare to be clement: but you, who have nothing to dread; you, who may call philosophy and victory your own; it is your's to assuage every real misery, every misery that is truly worthy of compassion. The pleadings of distress are always favourably heard; the voice of distress should ever prevail over the conquerors of the world: and, indeed, what is looked for from genius, from success, from liberty, from republics? what, I say, is looked for but a diminution of our sufferings and an enlargement of our hopes?

and you, who are to return to your domestic fire-sides, and shrink back into your private capacities, what will you be, unless you resolve to shew yourselves generous? what, but warriors in the midst of peace, geniuses only in the art of war, at a time when every thought will be turned towards internal prosperity, and when of past dangers there will scarcely remain the shadow? Let your virtue make you look to futurity; let gratitude be bound down to you by permanent benefits. There is no proud capitol, no triumphal pomp, that can add to the lustre of your name: you have reached the pinnacle of military glory; and generosity alone still soars above your heads. Happy is the situation of an all-controuling power, when all obstacles cease to oppose it from without; when its whole strength is concentred within itself; when benevolence may be indulged and good be done without the instigation of any motive but virtue, or without even the suspicion that your benevolence can flow from any other source.*

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* In a work published about two years ago, and honoured by a suffrage than which none can be more flattering to pride (for it was quoted by Mr. Fox while pleading the cause of peace in the British Parliament) I have observed, "*that if peace be not made this year with France, it is difficult*

I might have treated of generosity, of pity, and of the greater number of the topics touched upon in this work, in their simple relation to morality, which enforces them as a law; but I think that true morality so perfectly accords and coincides with the general interest, that it always seems to me as if the idea of a duty was devised in order to abridge the exposition of the principles of conduct which might have been unfolded to man from a survey of his personal advantages; and as in the early years of life he is forbid to do what is evil, in the childhood of human nature he is still commanded what it might always be possible to impress on him by conviction. Happy should I deem my-

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to say in the heart of what empire they may reject it next year. Never, I believe, was there a prediction more thoroughly verified! With nearly the same degree of certainty one might conjecture what would be the result of the stupendous victories of the French, were they to make an ill use of them, and to pursue, while victorious, a revolutionary system. But so great is the flood of light that has been diffused through France; the republican form of government, which, from its very nature, is, after a time, so completely submitted to the real opinion of the public, that the first effects of such a system must expose its principle, and prevent that country from persisting in the work of ruin with that blind pertinacity which, during the progress of this disastrous war, has marked the conduct of several monarchical cabinets.

self if I have succeeded in opening the eyes of self-interest! happy also should I feel if I have abated any thing of its activity, by presenting mankind with an exact analysis of what is valuable in life; an analysis which may shew that all the various lots of men differ from each other more by the characters which they affect than by the situations they induce; that the pleasures which we may feel are all submitted to certain chances, which, after a time, reduce every thing to the same level; and that the happiness which is imagined to be found in external objects is only a phantom which the imagination creates, and which it then pursues and endeavours to arrive at without, while its only real existence is within ourselves.

FINIS.